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LIFE AND STRUGGLES OF WILLIAM LOVETT

VOL. I

"Onward ! while a wrong remains
To be conquered by the right ;
While oppression lifts a finger
To affront us by his might ;
While an error clouds the reason
Of the universal heart,
Or a Slave awaits his freedom,
Action is the wise man's part"—

CHARLES MACKAY.

LIFE AND STRUGGLES OF WILLIAM LOVETT

IN HIS PURSUIT OF BREAD KNOWLEDGE, AND FREEDOM

WITH SOME SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE DIFFERENT ASSOCIATIONS HE BELONGED TO AND OF THE OPINIONS HE ENTERTAINED

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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INTRODUCTION

The Life and Struggles of William Lovett which is now reprinted from the first edition of 1876, is more than the mere autobiography which its title might suggest. Lovett was a Cornishman, born in 1800 at Newlyn, who migrated to London in 1821. From about 1825 onwards he was actively engaged in public work, and from 1836 to 1839 he was the spokesman of the political labour movement which started with the formation of the London Working Men's Association, and which developed into Chartism. Place, whom he knew intimately, and whom Lovett esteemed as a "clear-headed and warm-hearted old gentleman," described him as a "man of melancholy temperament soured with the perplexities of the world," but "possessed of great courage and persevering in his conduct," and remarked, "his is a spirit misplaced."[1] Though without either the cool adroitness of Place, or the gifts of the mob-orator which made and ruined O'Connor, he was enough of a personality to be the leader of working-class politics in London, at a time when London was more truly the political capital than it is to-day, and was evidently one of those who are born to be given office by any organisation with which they are connected.

Lovett's career—thrown out of work by the competition of a new trade, excluded at first by the union from what afterwards became his profession because he had not served an apprenticeship, craftsman, coffee-house keeper, agitator, prisoner, journalist and schoolmaster—is an epitome of the social confusion in which the working classes were

[1] Additional MSS., 27, 791, pp. 67, 241, quoted Hovell, *The Chartist Movement*, pp. 55–6.

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plunged during the passage of industry from the old order to the new. As a member and afterwards president of the Cabinet-makers' Society,[1] store-keeper to the first London Co-operative Trading Association, secretary of the British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge, a member of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union which blazed up for a few months in 1834, founder and secretary of the London Working Men's Association, secretary of the Chartist Convention of 1839, secretary of the National Association for Promoting the Political and Social Improvement of the People, and a delegate to Sturge's Complete Suffrage Conference in 1842, he saw from the inside almost every popular movement of the thirties and forties.[2] He attended the London Mechanics Institute, where he heard Birkbeck, and possibly Hodgskin, lecture; was a colleague of Cleave, Hetherington and Watson in their agitation for a free Press;[3] had his furniture sold because he refused to serve in the militia "on the ground of not being represented in Parliament";[4] knew reformers and prophets of the old generation and the new, Cobbett, Hunt, Carlile, Cobden and Owen, whose principles he absorbed, while resenting his autocratic methods; denounced, to the annoyance of Place, who was working for unity," the Whig Reform Bill";[5] petitioned Parliament for temperance reform and the opening of museums on Sundays; reasoned with Melbourne as to the legality of public meetings in Lincoln's Inn Fields, while "a posse of the new police were posted in the next room" to protect the minister against the deputation of desperadoes,[6] and fought the battle of the trade unions when they were threatened with a revival of the Combination Acts in 1837.[7] Above all he was the secretary of the London

[1] Lovett, *Life and Struggles*, p. 33.

[2] *Life and Struggles*, pp. 42–3 (Co-operation), 88–9 (Grand National Consolidated Trades Union), 93–9 (London Working Men's Association), 205–19 (Convention), 250–5 (National Association), 279–91 (Complete Suffrage Movement).

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 55.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 160–7.

Working Men's Association, and drafted the document which was afterwards published as the People's Charter.[1] He was careful to preserve the manifestos and addresses, many of them written by himself, in which the various organizations with which he was connected, in particular the London Working Men's Association, expounded their views to the working-class public of Great Britain, Ireland, Canada, the United States, Belgium and France. A considerable number of them, together with the famous Charter, are printed in the following pages.

Lovett had certain limitations both of experience and of character which make his account of the Chartist Movement, if taken by itself, liable to mislead the reader. His adult life was spent in London, and he was perhaps a little inclined to see the rest of England under the optical illusion which residence in London is apt to create. Birmingham was his *ultima Thule*, and, a fact which had disastrous effects on the leadership and fortunes of Chartism, he did not know or understand the north. Like most thoughtful workmen of the time he loathed the new industrialism—"children forced to compete with their parents, wives with their husbands, and the whole society morally and physically degraded to support the aristocracies of wealth and title." But he was not himself of it. A skilled craftsman and member of an ancient and exclusive trade union, he had no first-hand knowledge of industrial England, with its turbulent population of miners and cotton operatives, swept together, without traditions or organization, in towns which were little better than mining camps. To that as yet undisciplined force, which, led by O'Connor, snatched the Chartist movement after 1839 out of the hands of London, and carried it forward on a wave of misery and violence to its ignominious collapse, Lovett, by temperament a student and a teacher, made little appeal. Like Sir Charles Napier,[2] the most discerning and most chivalrous of enemies, who as general in charge of the northern command averted a collision compared with which Peterloo

[1] *Life and Struggles*, pp. 116–241, App. A and B.
[2] W. F. P. Napier, *Life and Opinions of Sir C. J. Napier*, Vol. II.

would have been child's play, he regarded the "physical force men" as the worst enemies of his cause. But, unlike Napier, he does not seem to have understood the tempest of despair and indignation which responded to the denunciations of Bull and Stephen and Benbow, which prompted the midnight drillings on the moors, raised barricades in Staffordshire, and at Ashton-under-Lyne burst into the cry "O ye tyrants, think you that your mills will stand?"[1] Hence, though his detestation of the egomania of the great charlatan O'Connor is intelligible enough, he perhaps exaggerates the mischief for which O'Connor was personally responsible, because he had not grasped the conditions which made him a power.

Apart from these limitations there are several gaps in Lovett's story. His account of the first Chartist Convention is disappointingly meagre. Circumstances prevented him from having continuous and direct knowledge of the movement after 1839. From August of that year to July, 1840, he was, much to his credit, in prison. His description of Frost's rebellion in Wales, a mysterious episode which gave rise to the wildest theories and to endless recrimination, is, therefore, unreliable. When he returned to London, in 1840, he was marked down for destruction by O'Connor, into whose hands the leadership of the movement had passed, and who, though not himself a very valiant warrior, would allow no compromise with the "moral force humbugs." He founded a new organization, "the National Association of the United Kingdom for Promoting the Social and Political Improvement of the People," to carry on the agitation for the Charter, and attended on behalf of it the abortive Complete Suffrage Conference which was summoned by Sturge in 1842 in the hope of uniting reformers both of the working and of the middle classes. But the main organ of the Chartist movement, such as it now was, was the National Charter Association, of which he had refused to become a member, and that Association was controlled by O'Connor. Lovett continued to be prolific of organizations and an indefatigable pamphleteer. After his release

[1] Quoted Hovell, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

from prison he helped to found not only the National Association, but societies called the "Democratic Friends of all Nations,"[1] and "the People's League,"[2] and projected a "General Association of Progress."[3] Addresses and manifestos poured from him. His last petition to Parliament, proposing to establish "a Higher Intellectual and Moral Standard for Members of Parliament,"[4] was inspired, appropriately enough, by the blunders of the Crimean campaign, and suggests that even in old age he retained the faith which can move mountains. Apart from this he took no part in politics after 1850. His old colleagues drifted off into other spheres of activity, Vincent into temperance reform, Cooper into preaching. Lovett, as his book shows, had always been an enthusiast for education, and deserves the name of "the Chartist Schoolmaster" far more than Bronterre O'Brien, to whom O'Connor applied it. From 1850 to 1877 education was his main interest, and his principal activity was in connection with the school established by the National Association.

While Lovett's book contains only a fragmentary account of the later years of the Chartist movement, the picture which it gives of its genesis and earlier development is invaluable. During the creative period, when doctrine was being formulated and methods thought out, the London Working Men's Association was the centre of Chartism, and Lovett was the centre of the Association. From the first there was a double strand in Chartism. On the surface it was a continuation of the demand for the reform of Parliament as a step towards political democracy, which had been advanced by Wilkes and Cartwright in the seventies of the previous century, which had been regarded with indulgence by some of the Whigs in the days of calm before the deluge, which had been reduced to a rational and systematic theory by the Utilitarians, and had been at once met and disappointed by the Reform Act of 1832. Like the fathers of the movement fifty years before, the Chartists demanded manhood—Lovett himself believed in

[1] *Life and Struggles*, p. 314. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 343.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 330–6. [4] *Ibid.*, pp. 376–9.

adult-suffrage and annual parliaments: their additions were the four other points, equal electoral districts, vote by ballot, payment of members and abolition of a proper qualification.[1] It was characteristically English that what afterwards became a semi-revolutionary movement on the part of the working classes, of whom none had a vote and almost all appeared to most members of Parliament a band of ragged ruffians, should pour its grievances into the parliamentary mould. Unfortunately it was hardly less characteristic that of the powers of this world hardly one had the wit to thank Heaven for the inveterate constitutionalism of his fellow-countrymen.

Though the Charter was political, Chartism was largely economic. It was, as Marx pointed out, the entry in politics, not merely of a new party, but of a new class. The English counterpart of the continental revolutions of 1848, it was at once the last movement which drew its conceptions and phraseology from the inexhaustible armoury of the French Revolution, and the first political attack upon the social order which had emerged from the growth of capitalist industry. The declaration that "all men are born equally free, and have certain natural and inalienable rights," marched hand in hand with the doctrine that "Labour is the source of all wealth."[2] Capitalism upon a large scale and in a highly concentrated form was still sufficiently novel in the thirties to seem not only repugnant but unstable. Among the hand-loom weavers who were starving then, there were men who could remember a period in their youth when they had been something of the village aristocracy described by Bamford,[3] and who were the more ready on that account to become the victims of O'Connor's fantastic land scheme. It was the revolt against capitalism which made the magic of Chartism to thousands of men who were too wretched to be willing to subordinate the passion for economic change to the single issue of political reform. Behind it lay two generations of social misery

[1] But Cartwright had advocated two of these, viz. payment of members and vote by ballot. [2] *Life and Struggles*, p. 74.
[3] Bamford, *Passages in the Life of a Radical.*

and thirty years of economic discussion, which had percolated into the mind of the working classes partly through popular papers, such as the *Poor Man's Guardian* and the *Co-Operative Magazine*, partly through the teaching of the early English socialists, Thompson, Hodgskin, Gray, and above all, Robert Owen. The essence of Chartism was, in fact, an attempt to make possible a social revolution by the overthrow of the political oligarchy.

These two objects were not incompatible. But in an age when the mass of the working classes were without either organisation or political experience, they were not easily pursued together. The struggle between the conflicting interests of economic reform and political democracy, corresponding as it did to a difference in outlook between north and south, and to the rival policies of revolution and persuasion, ultimately broke up the movement. The achievement of Lovett and of the organization which he founded was to create an Independent Labour Party which aimed at both, but which aimed first at political democracy. It was, as Place said, "the first time that the desire for reform has been moved by the working people, and carried upwards."[1] The London Working Men's Association was established in June, 1836, as the result of two great disillusionments, the Reform Act of 1832 and the collapse of the syndicalist movement led by Owen in 1834. The first had taught it to be independent of middle-class leaders. "The masses, in their political organizations," writes Lovett, "were taught to look up to great men (or to men professing greatness) rather than to great principles. We wished, therefore, to establish a political school of self-instruction among them, in which they should accustom themselves to examine great social and political principles, and by their publicity and free discussion help to form a sound and healthful public opinion throughout the country."[2] The failure of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union had at once left an opening for a political movement, and emphasized the necessity of making the basis political

[1] Wallas, *Life of Francis Place*, p. 368.
[2] *Life and Struggles*, p. 94.

reforms upon which the working classes agreed rather than social theories upon which they differed. Lovett himself, though in later life he repudiated the ambiguous name of socialist, was in his youth a disciple of Owen, and believed "that the gradual accumulation of capital by these means (i.e. co-operation) would enable the working classes to form themselves into joint-stock associations of labour, by which (with industry, skill and knowledge) they might ultimately have the trade, manufactures and commerce of the country in their own hands."[1] But, on the principle of first things first, he was resolute that the London Working Men's Association should concentrate its energy upon securing political reform. It was not to be "led away by promises of repealing the detested Poor Law, or any of the other infamous laws which Whig and Tory have united to enact, and to laud their excellence, unless the promise be accompanied by the pledge of universal suffrage, and all the other great essentials of self-government."[2] "They had read and admired," wrote Lovett of of a group which met in 1831 and later supplied the London Working Men's Association with some of its members, "the writings of Robert Owen, Peter (*sic*) Thompson, Morgan, Gray and others, and resolved to be instrumental to the extent of their means and abilities in spreading a knowledge of these works throughout the country. They intended, however, to avoid the course taken by Robert Owen. He had all along, though in his mild manner, condemned the radical reformers, believing, as he did, that reform was to be effected solely on his plan. The radical reformers of the working classes, believing that his plan could only be carried out when the reforms they sought had been accomplished . . . resolved to take up such part of his system as they believed would be appreciated by the working classes, and be the means of uniting them for specific purposes."[3]

The London Working Men's Association was, even at its zenith, an extremely small body. The total number of

[1] *Life and Struggles*, p. 42. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 122.
[3] Wallas, *Life of Francis Place*, pp. 269–70

members admitted between June, 1836, and 1839, was only 279.[1] Its objects, which are set out by Lovett on pp. 94–95 of his *Life and Struggles*, were to agitate for parliamentary reform, for the freedom of the Press, and for the creation of a national system of education, and to collect and publish information upon social and industrial questions. Its method was education and propaganda. At a later stage in its career the character and policy of the movement started by the Association were transformed by the very success of its earlier efforts. From the early months of 1837 onwards it employed "missionaries," who, by the end of the year, had founded over one hundred daughter associations in different parts of the country. The publication of the People's Charter in June, 1837, enormously increased its prestige and multiplied its adherents. Chartism was taken up by veteran agitators like Benbow, who could look back to the days of the Hampden Clubs and Peterloo, and politicians in search of a platform like Beaumont and O'Connor. The agitations against factory slavery and the detested new Poor Law swelled the main movement and cast their own sombre colour upon it. But for the first three years of its existence the policy pursued by the London Working Men's Association had nothing in common with the orgy of mob oratory in which Chartism finally collapsed. Its appeal was to public opinion : its instrument argument and persuasion—"to publish their views and sentiments in such form and manner as shall best serve to create a moral, reflecting, yet energetic public opinion ; so as eventually to lead to a gradual improvement in the condition of the working classes, without violence or commotion." [2]

Lovett's policy of working for gradual reform through the pressure of public opinion was, of course, no novelty. But it was in striking contrast both with Owen's apocalypse of a new moral world, which was to descend upon mankind "like a thief in the night," and with the whirlwind campaign of sterile denunciation and fantastic promises, which fed the vanity of O'Connor. Neither economic circumstances nor the attitude of the ruling classes made Lovett's course

[1] Hovell, *op. cit.*, p. 62. [2] *Life and Struggles*, p. 95.

easy. At a time when whole districts lived on the edge of starvation, and when the Government seized every opportunity to crush peaceful attempts at organization, the restraint and foresight needed to concentrate on slowly won political changes, which, in turn, could only very slowly bring social amelioration, were qualities not easily to be maintained. Revolt seemed a more direct route than persuasion. "Propose to any working man," wrote Place, a veteran in popular movements, in 1835, the year before the foundation of the London Working Men's Association, "any great measure affecting the whole body, and he immediately asks himself the question, What am I to get by it? meaning, What at the moment am I to have in my hand or in my pocket? . . . He has not the heart to do anything even for his own advantage, if that advantage be remote, and he has no desire to stir himself for the advantage of other persons."[1]

Lovett had no illusions as to the character and policy of the Government. He had been dogged by its spies, had seen the savage onslaught upon trade unions from Dorsetshire to Glasgow, and knew that it at once hated and feared any symptom of independent political activity, even of independent thought, among the working classes. In view of the preparations for rebellion made by influential men of the middle classes in 1832, he was justified in regarding with some impatience their sanctimonious denunciation of rebels impelled by far graver causes in 1839. In language reminiscent of the Whig doctrine that a breach of the original contract absolves men from the duties of obedience, he argued that "when an attempt is made to destroy representative rights, the only existing bond of allegiance, the only power through which laws can be justly enforced, is broken, and the time has arrived when society is resolved into its original elements."[2] Tireless in preaching moderation and patience, he was prepared to consider in the last resort what came to be called "ulterior measures." It was he who drafted the manifesto of 1839, submitting to the decision of public meetings the question whether Chartists

[1] Wallas, *op. cit.*, pp. 370–1. [2] *Life and Struggles*, p. 111.

should support "the sacred month," and whether "according to their old constitutional right . . . they have prepared themselves with the arms of freemen to defend the laws and constitutional privileges their ancestors bequeathed to them."[1] But he regarded violence as the last weapon of defence, not as part of his political offensive. For the hare-brained rhetoric which made violence certain of occurrence and futile when it occurred, for the policy of coquetting with revolution while appealing, at the same time, to the spirit of the constitution, and of coming, to quote a characteristic specimen of O'Connor's oratory, "morally into collision" with the Government, he had all the contempt of the genuine craftsmen for the antics of the charlatan. Down to the end he believed that one principal cause of the defeat of Chartism was that the advocates of physical force had driven all waverers on to the side of reaction. "Whatever is gained in England by force, by force must be sustained; but whatever springs from knowledge and justice will sustain itself."[2] It was necessary to choose whether to appeal to goodwill and reason, or to organize an insurrection, the fate of which it did not need the military experience of Napier to foretell. He chose the former.

The methods of the London Working Men's Association were determined by his choice. "Such Associations," said Place, to whom Lovett owed much, and who attended the Sunday meetings of the Association in 1837, "can only succeed by long-continued, steady, patient, liberal conduct, accepting and using every kind of assistance which may at any time and in every way be available, making no absurd pretensions to anything, and especially not to superior wisdom and honesty, but acting with becoming modesty, but with indomitable perseverance."[3] During the first three years of its existence, the Association carried out Place's programme. Secrecy was to be eschewed. There was to be no talk of violence. Middle-class support, whenever possible, was to be enlisted. Such use as possible was

[1] *Life and Struggles*, pp. 218–19. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 197.
[3] Wallas, *op. cit.*, p. 370.

made of the not very reliable group of radical members of Parliament. The committee appointed to draft the Bill embodying the Charter included, with six members of the Association, O'Connor, Roebuck, Leader, Handley, Thompson and Crawford.[1] The presentation of the Petition of 1839 was entrusted to Attwood. The choice was unfortunate. Every war and every period of social crisis seems to produce strange doctrine as to currency. Attwood was the leading prophet of the particular heresy which flourished in the thirties. For the sake of it he had laboured in Birmingham for the Reform Bill of 1832. For the sake of it he was prepared to swallow the Charter. He regarded universal suffrage as a milestone on the stony way to the shining goal of universal paper. And he introduced the Petition to the House of Commons in a speech which, if any hope of reasonable consideration being given it by the House had existed, was calculated to extinguish it for ever.[2]

In the meantime the Association laboured to influence public opinion by a stream of reports, addresses and manifestos setting out the working class point of view as to contemporary political and social questions. Of the petitions and addresses which are printed in the following pages some seventeen were issued by the London Working Men's Association and appeared in the three years between June, 1836, and August, 1839. The majority of the remainder emanated from the National Association of the United Kingdom for Promoting the Political and Social Improvement of the People, which was founded by Lovett in 1840, soon after his release from prison. The range of subjects covered by them is remarkable. They give a broad and generous interpretation to the political aspirations of labour, and are singularly free from the exclusive preoccupation with immediate economic issues of which popular movements are often accused. In addition to the agitation for the reform of the franchise, which was its main work, and the case for which it set out in the pamphlet,

[1] *Life and Struggles*, pp. 114–17.

[2] But he tried to keep paper out of it, *see* Hovell, *op. cit.*, pp. 160–1.

"the Rotten House of Commons,"[1] it produced reports on the condition of the silk weavers of Spitalfields and on education.[2] It issued a manifesto defining the attitude of the Chartists to the agitation for the repeal of the Corn Laws, in which, without imputing the motives afterwards ascribed by some Chartists to the manufacturing and commercial interests behind the free trade agitation, it combated the suggestion that an alteration of the tariff was more important than the enfranchisement of the working classes.[3] In 1837, when the disorder accompanying a strike of cotton spinners in Glasgow led to the outrageous sentence of seven years transportation being passed on certain members of the union, and to the appointment by the Government of a Select Committee to inquire into the whole subject of trade unionism, the Association undertook much the same part as had been played by Place and Hume in 1824 and 1825. It appointed a Trade Combination Committee, arranged with societies to send witneses, issued an "Address to the working classes in reply to the attacks made on trade unions," and generally attempted, in 1837 a somewhat forlorn hope, to secure that the unions had fair play.[4]

From the beginning the Association claimed the right of the working classes to be heard on international and colonial affairs. It addressed a manifesto to the working classes of Belgium on the occasion of the imprisonment of Jacob Katz,[5] petitioned Parliament on behalf of Canada against the policy of coercion adopted by Russell,[6] sent an address of sympathy to the Canadian people,[7] and published manifestos to the working classes of Europe,[8] to the Precursor Society of Ireland, and to the Irish people.[9] The National Association of the United Kingdom, which after 1840 did the work formerly done by the London Working Men's Association, was almost equally prolific. It not

[1] *Life and Struggles*, pp. 102–4
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 138–50.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 178–84.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 162–7.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 100–102.
[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 105–9.
[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 109–12.
[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 154–62.
[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 186–94, and pp. 195–203.

only produced a number of manifestos on its special subject of Parliamentary Reform, but continued the international tradition of the older organization. It denounced the reception of the Czar, on the occasion of his visit to England in 1844,[1] issued in the same year an "address to the working classes of France on the subject of War,"[2] and in 1846, when feeling ran high on the question of the Oregon boundary, published "an address to the working classes of America on the war spirit sought to be created between the two countries."[3] In 1848, when the French Revolution had revived for a moment the golden dreams of 1789, it sent a congratulatory address to the French, urging them to prepare themselves "intellectually and morally for the coming age of freedom, peace, and brotherhood."[4]

These manifestos, the majority of which were by Lovett, contain in epitome the philosophy of Chartism. Their fundamental ideas are four.

(1) Social evils are the consequence of social institutions, and can be removed by altering them. "When we investigate the origin of pauperism, ignorance, misery and crime we may easily trace the black catalogue to exclusive legislation."[5] The speculations of the nineteenth century upon the causes of economic misery had begun with the debate between Malthus and Godwin, and in one guise or another most subsequent thought marches under one or other of those rival banners. The argument that it is the natural tendency of population to press upon the means of subsistence had pacified uneasy consciences among the middle classes with the assurance that the evils of society were the work of nature, not of man, and after 1850, when economic fatalism had been reinforced by the triumphant gospel of evolution, the mind of labour for a time submitted to that creed. From 1820 to 1850 the leaders of working class thought were in revolt against it. They drew their weapons from the forgotten armoury of pre-Marxian Socialism. Godwin, who explained to young men in 1793 the nature

[1] *Life and Struggles*, pp., 186–94, and pp. 195–203.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 304–5.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 319–25.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 336–9.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 266.

of the new force which was overthrowing thrones and castles in France, and whose "Political Justice" was reprinted in 1843, at the height of the Chartist movement, and Owen, who had found in Godwin a confirmation of his own doctrine of the all-importance of environment, had taught them that character is formed, not by man, but for man, that in a world where the external order was just and reason allowed full play he would progress swiftly towards perfection, and that there was no force within him, no original sin or intractable remnant of the tiger or ape to drag him down. At the end of the eighteenth century Paine and Spence had turned on the English system of land tenure criticism which Chartists used in the thirties and forties. A host of critics of capitalism, from Charles Hall, whose *Effects of Civilisation* appeared in 1805, to Hodgskin, who published his *Labour Defended against the Claims of Capital* in 1825, had pointed the antithesis between increasing wealth and increasing poverty. Colquhoun, the first statistician of modern capitalism, and Ricardo, the Balaam of economic science, whose curious fate it was to supply the corner-stone to doctrines which he detested, by insisting that labour is the source of all wealth had given a new sting to the inevitable question "Why, then, is the labourer poor?" Above all, Owen had supplied reformers with an ideal for which to work, the Co-operative Commonwealth.[1]

Chartism absorbed these ideas and made them the basis of a political movement. If wealth is rightly distributed, there is sufficient for all. "The country . . . has by the powers and industry of its inhabitants been made to teem with abundance, and were all its resources wisely developed and justly distributed would impart ample means of happiness to all."[2] This abundance has been produced by the workers. "Labour is the source of all wealth."[3] Poverty is not due to scarcity but to unjust social institutions. "By many monstrous anomalies springing out of the constitution

[1] For the views and influence of these writers, *see* Beer, *History of British Socialism*.

[2] *Life and Struggles*, p. 127. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

of society, the corruptions of government, and the defective education of mankind, we find the bulk of the nation toiling slaves from birth to death—thousands wanting food or subsisting on the scantiest pittance."[1] The land, "which a bountiful Creator bestowed upon all his children," is "engrossed and held in possession by comparatively few persons," who render no service in return for it, though in legal theory its tenure is conditional on the performance of public functions.[2] Manufacturers and capitalists, "by their exclusive monopoly of the combined powers of wood, iron, and steam . . . cause the destitution of thousands . . . and have an interest in forcing their labour down to the minimum reward."[3] As a result, the workers "submit to incessant toil from birth to death, to give in tax and plunder out of every twelve hours' labour the proceeds of nine hours to support their idle and insolent oppressors. . . . The greatest blessings of mechanical art are converted into the greatest curses of social life."[4] The theory of surplus value, in all but name, is already in existence.

(2) From a social philosophy of this kind Syndicalism springs as readily as political agitation. But Syndicalism had been discredited by the failure of the Owenite movement of 1834, and its failure left the field clear for a renewal of the attack on Parliament. The cause of social evils is Government by a political oligarchy which has an interest in maintaining them. "The people . . . now perceive that most of our oppressive laws and institutions, and the consequent ignorance and wretchedness to which we are exposed, can be traced to one common source—Exclusive Legislation, and they therefore have their minds fixed on the destruction of this great and pernicious monopoly, being satisfied that, while the power of law-making is confined to the few, the exclusive interest of the few will be secured at the expense of the many."[5] Nothing is to be hoped from existing parties, for Whigs and Tories are equally the enemies of the working classes. "One faction

[1] *Life and Struggles*, p. 127.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 92–3.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 104.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 214–15.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

is hypocritically talking of liberty, the other is sparing no pains to destroy the spirit of freedom . . . and to restore Tory ascendancy and misrule."[1] The House of Commons is not so much ignorant of social evils as indifferent to them. "While our social evils and anomalies have repeatedly been brought before you, you—whose duty it was to provide a remedy—have looked carelessly on, or have been intent only on your own interests or pleasures. Your own Commissioners have reported to you that thousands of infant children are doomed to slavery and ignorance in the mines and factories while their wretched parents are wanting labour and needing bread."[2] The remedy is political democracy, "a Parliament selected from the wise and good of every class, devising the most efficient means for advancing the happiness of all."[3]

The language of Chartism is sometimes reminiscent of Bentham's statement that the Government is a fraudulent trustee who uses "the substance of the people as a fund out of which fortunes might . . . nay ought . . . to be made," that the king is "corrupter-general," the aristocracy at once "corrupted and corrupting," and that "Corrupter-General and Co." is, therefore, the proper title of the firm. But the difference in spirit between such a work as James Mill's *Government* and democracy as conceived by Lovett is immense. To the former the State is not a band of brothers, but a mutual detective society: the principal advantage of popular government is that there are more detectives, and therefore, presumably, fewer thieves. To Lovett democracy is less an expedient than an ideal, the vision of liberty, fraternity, and equality which had intoxicated men's minds in the days before Liberalism was shorn of its splendours and its illusions. He is, in fact, a "Social Democrat." "To justly distribute the blessings of plenty which the sons of industry have gathered, so as to bless without satiety all mankind—to expand by the blessing of education the divinely mental powers of man, which tyrants seek to mar and stultify—to make straight the

[1] *Life and Struggles*, p. 119. [2] *Ibid.*, 272.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 119–20.

crooked path of justice and to humanize the laws—to purify the world of all the crimes which want and lust of power have nurtured—is the end and aim of the democrat."[1]

The instrument by which popular government is to be established is Parliamentary Reform. Manhood Suffrage is a natural right, for "as Government is for the benefit of all, all have equal rights, according to their abilities, to fill any of its offices; and, as the laws are said to be for the benefit of all, all should have a voice in their enactment." It is in accordance with the spirit of the constitution and has been proved to be beneficial by foreign experience. "We are contending for no visionary or impracticable scheme. The principles of our Charter were the laws and customs of our ancestors, under which property was secure and the working people happy and contented. Nay, these principles are now in operation in different parts of the world, and what forms the strongest argument in favour of their general adoption is that, wherever they are in practice, the people are prosperous and happy."[2] It is the only guarantee against misgovernment and the one remedy for economic oppression. "When we contend for an equality of political rights, it is not in order to lop off an unjust tax or useless pension, or to get a transfer of wealth, power or influence for a party, but to be able to probe our social evils to their source, and to apply effective remedies to prevent, instead of unjust laws to punish."[3] The argument that the masses are too ignorant to vote comes with a bad grace from governments which are at pains to keep them in ignorance. "The ignorance of which they complain is the offspring of exclusive legislation, for the exclusive few from time immemorial have ever been intent to block up every avenue to knowledge."[4] Political wisdom comes from the exercise of political power. "Political rights necessarily stimulate men to inquiry, give self-respect, lead them to know their duties as citizens, and, under a wise Government, would be made the best corrective of vicious and intemperate habits."

[1] *Life and Struggles*, p. 110.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 217.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 97.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 120.

(3) The condition of any genuine democracy is education: to work for the creation of a national system of education is the first duty of reformers. It is the one certain instrument of emancipation. "Imagine the honest, sober, reflecting portion of every town and village in the kingdom linked together as a band of brothers, honestly resolved to investigate all subjects connected with their interests, and to prepare their minds to combat with the errors and enemies of society. . . . Think you a corrupt Government could perpetuate its exclusive and demoralizing influence amid a people thus united and instructed?"[1] To withhold it is the most cruel of wrongs. "Is it consistent with justice that the knowledge requisite to make a man acquainted with his rights and duties should be purposely withheld from him, and that then he should be upbraided and deprived of his rights on the plea of ignorance?"[2] The governing classes have purposely made access to knowledge the privilege of the rich. "Though the time has gone by for the selfish and bigoted possessors of wealth to confine the blessing of knowledge wholly within their own narrow circle . . . yet still so much of the selfishness of caste is exhibited in their fetters on the Press, in their colleges of restriction and privilege, and in their dress and badge-proclaiming charity schools, as to convince us that they still consider education as their own prerogative, as a boon to be sparingly conferred upon the multitude, instead of a universal instrument for advancing the dignity of man and for gladdening his existence."[3] Education is "not a charity, but a right, a right derivable from society itself. . . . It is the duty of the Government to provide the means of educating the whole nation."[4]

When Lovett wrote these words, four years had elapsed since Parliament made the first grant of £20,000 towards elementary education. In the preceding thirty years two education bills had been introduced and rejected. It was not till 1836 that the duty on newspapers was reduced, and

[1] *Life and Struggles*, pp. 90–9.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 141.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 140–1.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 142.

not till 1855 that it was abolished. "Ministers and men in power," wrote Place in 1833, "with nearly the whole body of those who are rich, dread the consequence of teaching the people more than they dread the effect of their ignorance."[1] Historians of education have described the gradual process of enlightenment by which the ground was prepared for the establishment of something like a national system of education in 1870. But they have done something less than justice to the popular movements which demanded access to knowledge at a time when plans for the education of the working classes were regarded by a considerable section of opinion as not less absurd, and considerably more dangerous, than the proposal to educate animals. If public education in England still suffers from the defects of a system devised by one class for the discipline of another, it is partly because the efforts of working people themselves to promote it met in the past with frigid opposition.

When Lovett wrote of "the hawks and owls of society seeking to perpetuate the state of mental darkness," and of "the Utopians who failed to perceive that God had made one portion of mankind to rule and enjoy, and the other to toil for them and reverently obey them,"[2] he spoke from bitter experience. The first and greatest of working-class educationists, he himself was one of the Utopians. Like his friends, Place and Cooper, he had pursued knowledge with a passion which undermined his health, and which is not easily intelligible to those whose lines have been cast in more pleasant places. He was zealous to make it accessible to others. The background of his efforts was the doctrine and experiments of Owen. "Any general character," Owen had written, "from the best to the worst, from the most ignorant to the most enlightened, may be given to any community, even to the world at large by the application of proper means; which means are to a large extent at the command and under the control of those who have influence in the affairs of men"[3] What means these were he had shown at New Lanark Chartism, like Co-

[1] Wallas, *op. cit.*, pp. 338–9. [2] *Life and Struggles*, pp. 137–8.
[3] Owen, *First Essay on the Formation of Character.*

operation, absorbed eagerly this aspect of his teaching. Its leaders in London were men who themselves had come into contact with education through the Mechanics Institute, or through the more informal gatherings for reading and discussion, like that held by "the liberals" in Gerrard Street about 1825, which, Lovett says, "first stimulated me to intellectual inquiry."[1] The London Working Men's Association gave education a prominent place in its programme. The fourth of its eight objects was "to promote, by all available means, the education of the rising generation, and the extirpation of those systems which tend to future slavery"; the last, "to form a library of reference and useful information."[2] One of its earliest manifestos was an impassioned appeal for the creation of a national system of education. Chartist schools and churches sprang up in different parts of the country, like the "Shakespearian Association of Leicester Chartists," taught by Cooper.[3] The pamphlet "Chartism," which Lovett wrote in prison, was an educational tract rather than a political manifesto.[4] The National Association for promoting the Political and Social Improvement of the People, which was founded in 1840, proposed to establish circulating libraries, to erect schools for children and normal schools for teachers, and to offer premiums for essays on educational subjects. One school, at least, was actually established in London, and was managed for some years by Lovett himself.

If the practice of these reformers was crude, their educational projects were more generous and enlightened than anything which has yet been brought into existence. Education was to be free, universal, secular, financed from public funds, and administered by "school committees," elected by adult suffrage, and acting under a Committee of Public Instruction appointed by Parliament. Training colleges were to be established, and none but certificated teachers were to be allowed to teach in the public schools. No sanction was given to the arbitrary and mischievous division between elementary and secondary education,

[1] *Life and Struggles*, p. 35.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 95.
[3] Hovell, *op.cit.*, pp. 209–11.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 204–8.

which is the misfortune of a system organized on a basis of class. Elementary education was called by its right name—preparatory education—and was to be followed, as a matter of course, by the education of the adolescent. There were to be Infant Schools, held as far as possible in the open air, for children between three and six years of age, Preparatory Schools for children from six to nine, High Schools for children from nine to twelve, and Finishing Schools or Colleges for all over twelve. University education, like the earlier stages, was to be free. The schools were to be open in the evening for the further education of adults. Religious instruction was to be given out of the ordinary school hours. "Surely, when abundant time can be found for imparting religious instruction beyond that dedicated to the purposes of the school, and when so many religious instructors of all denominations can be found ready to impart their peculiar opinions, it would seem to be more in accordance with those precepts of Christ, mutually to unite in morally educating our children, to dwell in peace and union, which are the great essentials of religion, than by our selfish desires and sectarian jealousies suffer ignorance, vice and diseases to prevail."[1] Of course, no Government could be expected to notice such fantasies. If any had, some dark chapters in social history might never have been written.

(4) The cause of democracy is international. The Governments of Europe take common action, when they can, to suppress all movements for reform. "Though the despots of the world may quarrel for territory or plunder, they are cordially united to keep the people in subjection." An agitation which threatens one is regarded as the enemy of all. "The friends of freedom throughout the Continent have just cause to remember with feelings of execration the base conduct of the Government of England in secretly maintaining or openly opposing every attempt they have made to check the inroads of despotism or to advance the cause of democracy."[2] The people are

[1] *Life and Struggles*, pp. 137–150.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

helpless, for they are not informed as to foreign policy ; and governments, "by their well-organized system of falsehood too successfully imposed . . . on popular credulity."[1] The statesmen who attack democracy abroad are the very men who stifle it, when they can, at home. The tyranny from which the working classes suffer in England is the same as that which has ruined Ireland, which has produced an attack upon the liberties of the Canadian people, which used English soldiers and sailors to put down republican insurrections in Spain, and which on the Continent has led to the enslavement of Poland and Italy.[2]

Lovett's indictment of the existing international system is naturally couched in somewhat general terms, as any criticism of a system jealously guarded from popular observation must be. The claim that international policy should be judged by popular opinion marks more definitely, however, than any other point in the Chartist programme the emergence of a new force in public affairs. It was hardly possible to be connected with political agitation in the London of the thirties without coming into contact with unquiet refugees from the continental reaction. Lovett knew Mazzini, who opened a school in Greville Street.[3] Poles, like Beniowski,[4] who played an ambiguous part in Frost's insurrection, dabbled in Chartism, as in every other revolutionary movement. In 1844 Lovett took part in founding a society—"the Democratic Friends of all Nations"—composed of English radicals and exiles from France, Germany and Poland. In such an atmosphere internationalism came naturally to those engaged in popular movements. If the early English socialists anticipated the fundamental economic conceptions of Marx, it may be claimed as truly that the idea of the International, with its appeal "Workers of all lands, unite," was present to the minds of some of the leaders of Chartism.

The London Working Men's Association was the first English organization to produce manifestos for foreign consumption. They strike a note which has found since

[1] *Life and Struggles*, p. 160.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 154–1620.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
[4] Hovell, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

then a thousand echoes. The common economic interests of the proletariate are more profound than its national divisions. "We address you in that spirit of fraternity which becomes working-men in all the countries of the world . . . the subjugation and misery of our class can be traced to our ignorance and dissensions . . . the tyrants of the world are strong, because we, the working millions, are divided."[1] The combination of the governments must be met by a combination of the peoples. "Fellow-producers of wealth! Seeing that our oppressors are thus united, why should not we, too, have our band of brotherhood and holy alliance? Seeing that they are powerful through your ignorance, why should not we unite to teach our brethren a knowledge of their rights and duties?"[2] The "aristocracy have waged" wars "for the preservation of their order." But "the interests of our class are identified throughout the world," and consist, above all, in peace. The working classes of all lands "by whose industry the munitions of war must be raised . . . who are mainly selected to be the tools and instruments of warfare, . . . who must perform the bidding of some aristocratic minion, were it to war against freedom abroad or to exterminate your brothers at home,"[3] must unite to maintain peace. When in 1844 there was tension between the French and English Governments, the National Association published an address to the French working classes urging a united protest against war, and proposing the establishment of "a Conference of Nations, to be composed of three or more representatives, chosen by the people of their respective countries, to meet annually, for the purpose of settling all international disputes that may arise by arbitration, without having recourse to war."[4]

After 1842 the brains were out of Chartism. After the fiasco of 1848 it collapsed altogether as an organized movement. The worst period of economic misery was over. The edge of the industrial system was slightly

[1] *Life and Struggles*, p. 132. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 160.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 307. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 311.

blunted by the Factory Acts of 1847 and 1850, and the Public Health Act of 1848. In the triumphant outburst of commercial prosperity which began about 1850, both the idealism and the struggles of the heroic age were for a time almost forgotten. The energy of the working classes was diverted from political agitation into building up co-operation and trade unionism on a firm financial basis. Some of the reforms which the Chartists had demanded came at last, with the Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884, and the Ballot Act of 1872, though after the lapse of a generation and in an attenuated form. Lovett lived to see the Education Act of 1870 and to denounce its inadequacy. His own verdict on the struggles of his youth was that the Chartists had been right, and that political independence was the only hope of the working classes. "Most of the reforms that have taken place in my day have been won rather in despite of the wealthy and titled classes, than owe to them their origin, though they might at last have been made the unwilling instruments for carrying them into effect. So long, therefore, as those who are aiming at cheap and wise government help by vote or voice to place persons who have neither interest nor sympathy with them in the position of representatives or rulers, so long will they be putting obstacles in their own paths. The industrious classes, therefore, would do well . . . to resolve to do their work themselves."[1]

[1] *Life and Struggles*, p. 449.

PREFACE

THE commencement of the following pages I must attribute to the solicitations of some of my radical friends, who, when I had been talking of some of the events of my life, of the different associations I have been connected with, and of the various political struggles in which I have been engaged, have urged me to write the facts down, so that the working classes of a future day may know something of the early struggles of some of those who contended for the political rights they may be then enjoying; and of those who aided in establishing a free and cheap press, and in the diffusion of that knowledge which may have brought peace, plenty, and happiness around their dwellings. I shall offer no apology to the reader for the manner in which I have executed my task; as I have done it, as I best could, in those intervals of time not devoted to my labours for bread. It may, perhaps, be objected, that I ought not to have introduced the Addresses and Documents of the Associations I have belonged to into my own history. To this I reply that I have introduced nothing but my own writings, unless acknowledged; and I think that those who desire to know anything of me, would like to know what my opinions and sentiments were—(as well as great numbers who thought with me)—regarding the great questions of human right, social progress, and political reform; and these, in fact, constitute a great part of my own history. Moreover, most of the principles and opinions enunciated in those Addresses are as important now as when they were first written; the opinions given are as true now as then; and the advice in them is as necessary, as most of the reforms aimed at are yet to be achieved. The Working Classes are still compelled to pay and obey at the mandates of

exclusive legislators—Catholics, Jews, and Dissenters,—are in England still compelled to support a Church whose rule they hate, and whose doctrines they abhor. Education is still regarded by vast numbers as a means of filling Churches and Chapels, instead of a glorious instrument of human elevation—vast revenues are still squandered on armies and warriors—and a privileged few still maintain an ascendancy for evil, in court, camp, navy, and senate-house. The Working Classes are still to a vast extent following blind guides, and trusting to leaders and orators, outside their own ranks, to achieve that for them which their own efforts, self-sacrifices, and organization can alone effect. They still, unhappily, undervalue *mental and moral effort* for raising their class and advancing the welfare of their country, and therefore the advice given to them from thirty to forty years ago may still be found useful. I have yet another reason for adding the documents of the Associations I have taken part in, and for giving a brief account of their proceedings ; and it is this—That hitherto, little is found in history, or in our public papers, that presents a fair and accurate account of the public proceedings of the Working Classes ; for if the Whig and Tory papers of the day ever condescend to notice them, it is rather to garble and distort facts, to magnify faults and follies, and to ridicule their objects and intentions ; the pleasing of their patrons being more important with them than a truthful record. In consequence of this unjust system the historians and writers of a future day will have only garbled tales to guide them—as those of past history have—and hence a caricature is oftener given of the industrious millions than a truthful portrait.

It is very probable that, in reading the following pages, some ease-enjoying, pious believer in the excellence and purity of our social and political institutions, may be led to think that I have been a busy, restless, discontented fellow. In forming such opinion of me he will be politically correct ; and which disposition—unfavourable as it may appear to him—I am prepared to justify. For it is one of the items of my political creed, that the man who sees the

rights of the industrious many withheld by a privileged, idle, and incompetent few; who sees one law for the rich and another for the poor; and perceives injustice, corruption and extravagance daily sapping the vitals of his country, and remains a silent, passive, and contented spectator, is a soulless participator in the wrongs inflicted on his country and his kind. In thus stating this, others, again, may be led to think me self-consequential and conceited; which, if they do so, I shall think—with all deference to their opinions—that they will do me an injustice, for the older I get the more I am finding out my great deficiencies, and perceive how lamentably ignorant I am on a great variety of very important subjects with which I ought to be acquainted; and to think how much more useful I might have been, in my humble sphere, if I had had that early education which I hope, at no distant period, will be realized for the rising generation, and which I have hitherto, and will in future do my best to promote. But whatever may be the political or religious opinions of those who differ from me, I would ask them—ought the great battle and struggles of life to be *for the multitude, such as they are?* Seeing that the great author of our being has placed us in a world fitted with abundant means to secure the happiness of all, if justly administered, ought these means to be monopolized and applied to secure *an excess of luxuries for the few*, while the mass of the people are not only compelled to toil and labour to secure it, but to be very frequently destitute of the necessary means of subsistence for themselves and families? Justice, I think, will cause them in their conscience to say they should not; for, though toil and natural evils are the conditions of life, they ought not to be augmented by social and political injustice.

To account for any repetitions that may be found in the work—and which may have escaped me—I may state that it was begun in 1840, and has been added to from time to time up to the year 1874.

LIFE AND STRUGGLES OF WILLIAM LOVETT

CHAPTER I

In resolving to string together the events of my life I am hopeful that they may be of interest to my working-class brethren, with whom and for whom I have laboured for the last forty-five years, in the hopes of improving our social and political condition. The success of our efforts has not been to the extent of my wishes, although I believe great progress has been effected; and if the following pages may in any way serve to stimulate younger and wiser men to continue the contest, earnestly but discreetly, till the victory is won over political injustice, social oppression, ignorance and wrong, I shall not have written them in vain. I am conscious of my inability to make my story interesting by style or force of language, and therefore I shall tell it right on as best I can. I was born on the 8th of May, in the year 1800, in the little fishing town of Newlyn, situated about a mile westward of Penzance, in the county of Cornwall. My mother's maiden name was Kezia Green; she descended from a family of that name, well known in the west of the county for their skill as blacksmiths, and their strength and dexterity as wrestlers, trophies won by my grandmother's brother being still in the family. My father was a native of Hull, of the same name as myself, and the captain of a small trading vessel, often entering the port of Falmouth, where he met with my mother. He was, however, unhappily drowned in his last

voyage home before I was born, so I can say nothing further respecting him. My mother, however, in her lonely position, was relieved and taken care of by an affectionate brother, one who possessed great goodness of heart. Soon after this he commenced business as a ropemaker, and, being successful in the beginning, was able to render her ample assistance while I was an infant. He possessed an amiable disposition and a well-informed mind, which he had been assiduous in cultivating, and was always held up to me as an example by my grandmother. He died, however, of a decline, in his thirty-second year, and when I was very young. My mother being thus thrown entirely on her own resources, fortunately possessed a vigorous constitution and a persevering spirit, so that, by labouring industriously in the usual avocations of a fishing town, as well as by selling fish in Penzance market, she was enabled to bring me up in some degree of comfort, as well as to support for the most part her aged mother, who became greatly dependent on her. Among my earliest recollections was that of being taken in my grandmother's arms to see the illuminations for the short peace of 1803, was that of seeing a plentiful supply of raisins in the town, occasioned by the wreck of the fig-man—as she was called—the vessel that, I think, knocked down the works of the wherry mine in a storm ; and was my being driven home by an old shopkeeper of the town for having run down street in my night-clothes after my mother. I have also deeply engraven on the memory of my boyhood the apprehensions and alarms that were experienced amongst the inhabitants of our town regarding the press-gang during the war. The cry that " the press-gang was coming " was sufficient to cause all the young and eligible men of the town to flock up to the hills and away to the country as fast as possible, and to hide themselves in all manner of places till the danger was supposed to be over. It was not always, however, that the road to the country was open to them, for the authorities sometimes arranged that a troop of light horse should be at hand to cut off their retreat when the press-gang landed. Then might the soldiers have been

seen, with drawn cutlasses, riding down the poor fishermen, often through fields of standing corn where they had sought to hide themselves, while the press-gang were engaged in diligently searching every house in order to secure their victims. In this way, as well as out of their boats at sea, were great numbers taken away, and many of them never more heard of by their relations. On one of those exciting occasions, it so happened that an old man and his daughter were out at one end of the town, beside a small stream cleansing fish. The daughter was a woman between thirty and forty, and her father, I should think upwards of sixty, though he looked younger. Being thus engaged when the press-gang landed, and she being deaf, one of the gang had been and seized her father, and was bearing him off before she was aware of it. On raising her head, and seeing her father borne off a prisoner, she snatched up one of the dog-fishes she was opening, and running up to the man she asked him what he was going to do with her daddy. Pointing to the man-of-war at a distance, he told her he was going to take him aboard that big ship. The words had scarcely passed his lips before she fetched him a blow across his face with the rough dog-fish, that made him relinquish his hold. Then seizing her father with one hand, and resolutely defending him with the dog-fish in the other, she kept her opponent at bay till other women and boys came to her assistance. Thus was Honour Hitchens, by her courage, enabled to bear off her daddy in triumph amid the cheers and rejoicings of half the women and boys of the neighbourhood.

Like most children, when very young, my love of play was far greater than that of learning, for I was sent to all the dame-schools of the town before I could master the alphabet. Of my first school I remember being sent home at midsummer with a slip of paper round my hat with my name on it in red ink, given as a holiday present. Of my second school was the being put in the coal-cellar for bad conduct, on the second and last day of my being there. Eventually, however, I was instructed to read by my great-grandmother, who lived in the village of St. Creed,

about three miles from our town, she being at that period about eighty years of age. A circumstance I remember in connection with this kind old lady induces me to believe that I had a good memory when a child. My mother, who generally paid me a visit once a week to bring me clean linen, on one occasion made me a present of Dr. Watt's Divine Songs, saying at the same time, "William, when you have learnt them all, I will make you a present of a new Bible." This promise so far stimulated me to my task, that I had learnt to repeat them all from memory in a fortnight's time; and I eagerly sent home word by a neighbour to tell my mother to bring the present she promised me as I had learnt all the songs. On going to meet her a portion of the way, as I usually did, I mounted on a large rock to await her coming, and as soon as she saw me at a distance, she held up the Bible to assure me that my request had not been forgotten. I soon, however, got too troublesome for my poor great-grandmother, and was taken home; and I remember that the day after I nearly cut off the top of a finger in playing with a knife. My grandmother's sister then took me to live with her for a short time. She was a kind-hearted woman, but fond of drink at times, and I, having accidentally broken one of her windows, one day was sent home in a tiff. I was then sent to a boys' school to learn "to write and cypher," thought at that time to be all the education required for poor people. It was the only school in the town at that time, and I had two masters while there. The first master was a severe one, and the second was somewhat worse. Custises on the palm of the hand and very severe canings were punishments for not recollecting our tasks, and on one occasion I saw him hang up a boy by the two thumbs with his toes just touching the ground for playing truant. Here, too, I caught the small-pox from seeing a little girl brought into the school in her grandmother's arms; she having her little face and arms thickly beset with the dark-scabbed pustules, caused a strange shivering sensation to come over her at the moment, and in a short time I was taken ill with the disease. I think that fear had much to

do with it, though the germs must undoubtedly have been wafted towards me. I must here state that the disease at that time being greatly dreaded, I was constantly cautioned by my friends to avoid all children that had had it recently, and being thus brought suddenly face to face with it, with no means of escape, I naturally felt alarmed. And what a terrible disease it was I can well remember, for I think I was seven or eight years old. But bad as I had it I was not marked with it as numbers of my schoolfellows were; for so terrible were its ravages at that period, that I can vividly remember the number of seamed and scarred faces among them. Vaccination at that time had not been introduced into our town, though inoculation for the small-pox was occasionally resorted to; but it was looked upon as sinful and a doubting of providence, although about that period one in every fourteen persons born died from its ravages. Having made but little progress at this school, when I got well I was sent to another about a mile from the town and near the parish church. Here I learned to write tolerably well, and to know a little of arithmetic and the catechism, and this formed the extent of my scholastic requirements. I remember being once flogged severely by the master, and I think I deserved it. It was in the winter time, and his little boy had set a trap in the garden for catching birds, when myself and another boy seeing some birds in the trap pulled down the opening and caught them. We then wrung their necks, brought them into the school, and put them into our school bags unobserved. Not having however wrung their necks effectually, in a short time they began to flutter, and this led to our detection and punishment. This master was, however, a very clever and ingenious person, and I think also a bit of a wit; for he being too busy on one occasion to set me a copy requested me to write one for myself. From some curious notions I had formed of royalty, I wrote for my copy—"All Kings have long heads," which when my master saw, he wrote on the opposite page, "All horses have longer heads." To prove how anxious my poor mother was to check the least deviation from what she believed

to be right and just in my conduct, I will relate the following: "Having returned from school one winter evening, and finding my mother not returned from market, I went to meet her. On crossing a beach leading to the next village, I saw two persons at a little distance from me seeking for something with a lantern. Before I came to them, seeing something shining upon the beach, I stooped down and found it to be a shilling. I accordingly made my way towards the parties, believing them to be seeking for it. But on enquiring what they had lost, I was replied to with a buffet on the head, and bidden to go my way. Taking this in dudgeon, I went on and took the shilling with me. Not meeting with my mother on the road I turned back, and found that she had got home before me. To her I told my story about the shilling, half believing that I had acted rightly, after the treatment I had received, until I saw the frown gathering on my mother's countenance, and the rod being sought for, by a few strokes of which I soon became enlightened to the contrary. She then took me back to the owner of the shilling, to apologize to him for not having given it to him as soon as I found it; and on my way back I received from her a lecture on honesty, which I never afterwards forgot. This old gentleman, to whom I took back the shilling, was a man of some little property in our town, and had, I believe, a large spice of humour in his composition as the following anecdote shows:—He having an orchard at the upper end of the street he lived in, from which he found it difficult to gather much of its fruit, by reason of repeated thefts, got an old man, who lived in a cottage at the bottom of it, to rent it from him. This old man was a journeyman miller, and made a great profession of religion; but was withal a very curious specimen of a religious man, as he could never be induced to say grace over fish and potatoes, a very common dinner in a fishing town. The first question when he came home at noon, was to ask his mistress what she had got for dinner. If it happened to be baked potatoes, pork, and pie-crust—a favourite dinner with him—Uncle Jemmy would kneel down and make a

long grace over it ; but if it was a dinner of fish and potatoes, Uncle Jemmy could never be induced to say grace ; for he always persisted that " God Almighty never ordained fish and potatoes for a working man's dinner." But to return to my story about the orchard. When the bargain had been concluded about the rent, mode of payment, etc., Uncle Jemmy turned to the proprietor and said, " Now, Mr. Pollard, if you have no objection, I'll say a few words of prayer over our bargain ? " No objection having been made, Uncle Jemmy knelt down and began his prayer, praying that God would send sunshine and showers, that he would protect the trees from blight, that he would give him abundant fruit, and that when the apples were ripe, he would prevent the boys from stealing them. At this point in his prayer, Mr. Pollard, who was standing up near him, tapped him on the shoulder and humorously said, " Uncle Jemmy, do you remember the time when I caught you in the orchard with your pockets full of apples ? " Upon which Uncle Jemmy turned angrily round and said, " Oh, Mr. Pollard, you should never interrupt a man in his prayers, for those you know were only eating articles, and now you have spoiled my prayer." He, evidently conceiving that in his case there was no sin in steal " eating articles," though he had earnestly prayed that the boys might be prevented from doing the same thing.

My mother, belonging to the Methodist Connexion, enforced on me very rigidly a regular attendance at chapel or church, and the reading of texts, prayers, and portions of Scripture, in the interval between the hours of attendance, so much so indeed, as to materially lessen the good she sought to confer ; for though I could seldom evade her vigilance, I began to think the duties imposed on me more irksome than profitable. The being obliged to frequent a place of worship three times of a Sunday, strictly prohibited all books but the Bible and Prayer Book, and not being allowed to enjoy a walk, unless to chapel, or recreation of any description, are sufficient to account for those boyish feelings. My poor mother, like too many

serious persons of the present day; thought that the great power that has formed the numerous gay, sportive, singing things of earth and air, must above all things be gratified with the solemn faces, prim clothes, and half-sleepy demeanour of human beings; and that true religion consists in listening to the reiterated story of man's fall, of God's anger for his doing so, of man's sinful nature, of the redemption, and of other questionable matters, instead of the wonders and glories of the universe; of the wondrous laws that govern it; of trying to understand and live in accordance with those laws; of performing our moral and religious duties; of trying to improve ourselves and to elevate our race; and of striving to make earth more in accordance with heaven. But although my mother was strict in the particulars I have referred to, she was very kind and indulgent to me in other respects. She took great pains in keeping me scrupulously clean and respectable in my person, and—what I then thought a very superfluous duty—great pains to keep me from playing with the boys of the town; for as I delighted in all kinds of boyish amusements, her mandates in this particular gave me much mental pain, as well as frequently involved me in many scrapes. But what enabled her, more than threats or promises, to keep me from vicious associates, was the encouragement she gave, and the inducements and means she afforded me for amusing myself at home. She laboured to convince me that good of some description was always to be realized from my cutting, carving, drawing, digging, or writing at home; but that nothing but vice, mischief, or folly could be gained by associating with the ignorant, idle, and vicious boys with which the streets abounded. One of my amusements after school hours, was the enclosing, digging, and cultivating a very small flower garden, which I had formed partly out of an old ruin adjoining our house. Another was what I then designated "drawing," being very rough sketches of birds, and flowers, more showy than natural. My first colours, however, were only bits of different coloured stones, which I found on the beach, or dug out of the rocks when the

tide was out, and which I rubbed down on another stone. But having copied out some bills for a German quack doctor, who lodged in the neighbourhood for a short time, he gave me some information about the names, and the mixing of water colours, as well as the place and mode of purchasing better drawing materials at the market town, With a few pence, given to me by my indulgent mother, I went and bought a few brilliant sorts, and the very showy productions these enabled me to make, soon met with a ready market among the neighbours, whose walls in a short time were very gaily, if not very tastefully, ornamented. I also possessed some skill in the use of my knife ; and boats, carved birds, and the making of bird-cages, afforded me much amusement, as well as often provided me with capital for new projects. It must not be supposed, however, that these home amusements, nor my mother's good advice, were so far effective as to keep me altogether from play ; for the love of it is so natural in youth, that the more it is sought to be restrained, the more it is craved after, and the buoyancy of feeling at times breaks through all restraints, especially when any great temptation presents itself. Such a temptation presented itself to me one fine moonlight night—and of a Sunday too—when a number of boys were assembled on the sands at play. My mother, I knew, had gone off to chapel, in the belief that I was safe at my aunt's taking tea, and as my aunt was not very particular in her enquiries when I went out, I bounded off as soon as I could to join in the fun. When I got down, however, I found the sands wetter than I expected, and having on a new jacket and trousers, I began to think it would be better to look on than join in the play. Before long, however, a mischievous fellow slyly suggested to another that it would be good fun to push me down and spoil my new clothes. The idea was no sooner suggested than it was acted upon, for one of them came upon me suddenly and pushed me backwards, but in falling one of my legs caught under in some way, and produced a terrible sprain in my ankle, said by the doctor to be far worse than a broken bone.

I was carried home by the boys ; my mother was sent for from chapel, who pronounced it to be a judgment inflicted upon me for breaking the Sabbath, but notwithstanding sent for the doctor. I suffered great pain with it, and it took many weeks' doctoring before I had the use of it again. I had, however, scarcely got over this trouble when I got into another, though not so painful nor expensive. It happened that a very large basking shark was found floating on the ocean, by some of the fishermen of the town, and towed on shore. It was of course a favourable opportunity for an assemblage of boys ; and while the fishermen were busy in cutting it open, and taking out the great quantity of liver and oil found in it, the boys were busy in their way in extracting amusement out of it. The mouth of the fish having been propped open by means of handspikes, some boys—myself among the number—had got into its mouth cutting away a black, stiff bristly fringe, that lined a part of it, and which bore a comb-like appearance. While we were thus busily employed, other mischievous fellows were busy in kicking the bottom of the handspikes on one side, which brought the jaws plop together and laid us sprawling at the bottom. Our cries soon brought assistance, and the mouth of the fish was opened, but the plight we were in from the oil and slime into which we were tumbled, can be better imagined than described. I remember it was some days before I got over my fright.

The time, however, had now arrived when it was necessary that I should learn some useful employment, and as my uncle had been prosperous in his business of rope-making, it was resolved that I should be apprenticed to that trade. I was accordingly bound to a firm of three persons, for the term of seven years. But very soon after I was bound the partnership was dissolved, and I was transferred for the remainder of my time to the acting partner. I may here observe that the division of labour, which is generally carried on in London, and other large towns, is not pursued in that part of the country, as far as rope-making is concerned, so that an apprentice has to

learn as many different branches of the trade as would take as many different apprenticeships to acquire in London and other places. This causes the country business to be a laborious one, and so I found it to be. Our rope-yard, being some distance from town, I had, in common with others, to carry to it heavy loads of hemp for our daily supply of spinning; and it being an open yard, not far from the sea-cliff, and very much exposed to the weather, caused me to feel the cold severely at first. I was also a mere stripling, very thin and tall, and no way fitted by my constitution for that laborious business. My master was also a very unfit person, at that time, for the instruction of youth, he being given to drink, very passionate, and scrupled not to relate in our presence many anecdotes of his dissipations among the women in early life. He was also very unreasonable at times, for he very frequently sent me with a heavy load of rope to the adjoining towns after I had done a hard day's work, so that when I returned home, my extreme fatigue has often taken away my appetite for food. But what I felt more severely than the labour inflicted on me, was the coming and going some of these lonely roads by night, for popular credulity had peopled particular spots with ghosts and appearances of various kinds, and in which I was a firm believer. For the numerous stories regarding those nocturnal visitants, told to me in infancy, reiterated in boyhood, and authenticated and confirmed by one neighbour after another, who had witnessed, they said, their existence in a variety of forms, riveted the belief in them so firmly in my brain, that it was many years after I came to London before I became a sceptic in ghosts. Nor was the belief in them confined to the young, for my master was so fearful of walking these lonely roads after dark—when he went to neighbouring villages to collect his debts, or to obtain orders—that he mostly ordered me or my fellow apprentice to come to meet him, and accompany him home. I remember one dark winter evening going to meet him, in company with a young fellow I had induced to be my companion, and not finding my master at the place appointed, we had to

follow him to the next village. Our road to this was up through a long dark lane, in a part of which a monumental stone was erected, on account of a murder having been committed there. Previous to our approach to this dreaded spot our fears had subdued our tongues and quickened our pulse; but conceive our feelings, when we saw through the darkness a monster ghost of about three feet high, with erect horns, and large eyes glaring at us, from immediately opposite the monument. We shrunk back for a moment in great terror, but our presence seems to have alarmed the monster also, for it rose up and proved to be a farmer's heifer, which had quietly laid itself down in front of this murderer's monument—which folly had erected in a public highway—doubtless without ever suspecting it would be taken for a demon. On another occasion, when we were making a cable for a large Indiaman, I saw another of those supposed ghosts. It was of a Sunday evening, and all the rope-makers of the town had assembled to help us with our large job, the consent of the parson having been first obtained, an essential requisite at that period, for working on a Sunday. About midnight my master found out that his stock of brandy was exhausted, and as the men on such occasions expected brandy, or other spirits, and as two well-known women lived at Mousehold, a village about a mile off, who dealt in the smuggled article, he thought the nighttime very opportune for obtaining it. I was accordingly sent off with a large bottle to procure some. I went with a very sorrowful heart; for it was a solitary way along the edge of the cliff, it was a ghostly hour, and many were the ghosts and goblins that had been seen on that road. It was, however, a bright moonlight night, and I had scarcely proceeded a quarter of a mile before I saw in the distance before me what appeared to be the outline of a woman all in white. It being such a solitary road, and such a lone hour of night, that it never once entered my head to think it a being of flesh and blood. No, it must be a ghost, but there was one consolation, which I drew from the ghost stories I had heard, it must be good and

not evil, for all good spirits were said to be white. Thus encouraged I went on, but with strange fears and curious imaginings notwithstanding, to overtake this good ghost; for though I was on the search after spirits, they were not of this complexion. The nearer I approached the better it seemed, as far as regards colour, for it was white from top to toe. When I got within a few yards of this stately slow walking figure I made a little noise with my feet, when lo! my ghost turned round and waited my approach. Alas! she was of the earth most earthly, for she proved to be the kept mistress of a lawyer of Penzance, and was returning home at this unseemly hour. Soon after my apprenticeship our home was broken up by my mother marrying a man with whom my grandmother and myself could not be comfortable; we therefore took a small house and went to live together, our subsistence depending on the most part on the five shillings per week which I received as wages, eked out by the little which my grandmother could earn in the fishing season. Our food consisted of barley-bread, fish and potatoes, with a bit of pork on Sundays. In fact, barley-bread was the common food in my boyhood, excepting that the fishermen mostly took a wheaten loaf to sea with them. I have also heard my mother say that so scarce and dear was corn of all kinds the year I was born in, that she could not get bread enough to satisfy her hunger, although she travelled many miles round about to seek to purchase it. It so happened that my bedroom window in this house was exactly opposite the window of a house having the reputation of being haunted. It was not, however, a deserted house, although most of its inmates had been frightened at different times by the ghost; the particulars of which, and the forms it assumed, have often been told me by mother, son, and daughter, with whom I was well acquainted. Whether an indigestible supper had anything to do with their fright, I had not the sense then to enquire. For me to pass this house, when visiting a neighbour at night, required what Mrs. Chick would call "an effort." But to avoid seeing the ghost from my bedroom window, I adopted the ex-

pedient of shutting my eyes whenever I entered the room. I mention these silly things to show that superstition of one kind or another was the curse of my boyhood, and I have reasons for believing that such notions are still firmly believed by thousands of our people. And those rulers, who by a wise system of education can succeed in enlightening the rising generation, so that they may laugh down such absurdities, will render to society a benefit none can estimate so well as those who have been the victims of such superstitious delusions; for, notwithstanding the progress of knowledge among our people, by means of the press, the school, and the rail, the belief in ghosts is still widely entertained. The last time but one when I visited my native place, there was quite a sensation there about a ghost that had been seen walking about without a head. For having laughed at the notion in presence of an old acquaintance of mine, a baker of the town, I was very seriously reprimanded, and told that I could not believe the Bible, for was it not said in it, that the Witch of Endor raised up the spirit or ghost of Samuel, and then he quoted other passages in favour of spirits. So deeply seated are these superstitious teachings, and so difficult are they to eradicate, that it is very much to be regretted that our sensational tale-writers still continue to foster the absurd notions of ghosts and goblins; for though some may laugh at them, they have a very prejudicial effect on the minds of others, and more especially on children. Being, as I have already said, fond of tools from a boy, I employed most of my leisure hours during my apprenticeship in making something ornamental or useful. I became an adept in the making of bird-cages, boxes of various descriptions, and, as my grandmother designated them, gimcracks of every kind. I had also a turn for mechanism, and succeeded in making a small machine, similar to those used in factories for the spinning of twine, which pleased my master so well when he saw it, that he wished me to take it to the rope-yard, by means of which we might all learn to spin twine. But this spinning machine turned out to be an experiment productive

of many disagreeables to me and my fellow apprentices; for after my master had taught himself and two of us boys to spin twine, he took it into his head to make set-nets, crab-nets, and eventually a foot-seine, and then requested us to go to sea with him of an evening to catch fish with him. To this I had a great aversion on account of sea-sickness, a malady I could never get over; indeed, on one occasion during these fishing excursions I narrowly escaped drowning. On another occasion during my apprenticeship I had another narrow escape from the kick of a horse. It occurred in this manner: a poor young fellow of the town, who had recently lost both father and mother, was dependent for his own and his brother's and sister's support, on any little jobs he could obtain by the employment of a horse and cart, left him by his father. Not having means for the support of his horse, he was obliged to turn it about the lanes to shift for itself. Seeing the poor horse feeding on the scanty herbage in the road below our rope-yard, it struck my fellow apprentice and myself that it might procure better food for a short time at one end of our yard, where there was a good crop of grass. We accordingly drove the horse up, where it revelled for a good bit on its good fare, and when we thought it had got its belly full, we thought it well to drive it down again, lest our master might come out and find fault with us. But on my approaching him to drive him down he threw out his two hind legs with great force, which, hitting me in the abdomen, sent me a great distance, and nearly struck the life out of me, the blow causing me to feel its painful effects for some time, thus exhibiting a sorry example of horse ingratitude.

When I was about sixteen or seventeen, I had, among my female acquaintances, two or three straw-hat makers, to please whom I was induced to try the experiment of making for them some steel straw-splitters, which at that time were very difficult to procure, as well as expensive. These are small steel-pointed instruments with circular heads, divided into equal sharp-cutting divisions for spliting the straws into equal portions of various degrees

of fineness, the same being fixed into ivory or bone stocks. Having succeeded in my attempt, I had several orders to execute for others in the same business, for at that period straw-hat making was a female mania in our neighbourhood. But what rendered my instruments of less value than those sold in the market town, was the inferiority of the stocks, they being made of wood carved with the penknife, instead of being turned out of ivory or bone. To remedy this defect I was induced to direct my attention to the making of a turning lathe, from the description of one I had met with in the fragment of an old book, and, after a great deal of scheming and contriving, I made one that answered my purpose. This opened up to me a new field of amusement as well as some little profit, for I not only succeeded in setting off my straw-splitters with bone stocks, turned out of the nicely bleached bone I met with on the beach, but in a short time I acquired some skill in common turning. By this new contrivance my female friends were also provided with straw mills for the pressing of their plat, as well as with hat and bonnet blocks, and implements of various kinds. With the aid of my lathe I was also enabled to make spinning wheels for the spinning of twine for fishing lines, of which I made several. About this time I was also fortunate enough to get access to a carpenter's shop, in which cabinet work was occasionally executed. Here in my leisure hours and on holidays, I acquired some proficiency in the use of carpenters' tools, and by purchasing of the proprietor such bits of wood as I needed, I was permitted to plane and work them up upon a spare bench. Near the end of my apprenticeship I was permitted to visit a great-uncle of mine, at a place called Porthleven, on the eastern coast of Mounts-bay, and to have a week's holiday ; my uncle being then the huer of a pilchard seine at that place. At that time they were building Porthleven Pier, and during my stay I was witness of the immense power of the sea on that coast during a gale of wind. The end of the pier is built of immense stones dovetailed into one another, and secured by iron clamps along the edges. One of these layers

had been put in its place before the gale came on, but had not been secured at the edges, and so powerful was the sea during the storm that the whole layer of these immense stones was driven out of its place, as if it had been a slice of bread. An old fisherman of the place took me round the coast, and, among other places, to the Loo Bar, where he gave me a graphic description of the different wrecks he had witnessed on that coast. He told me that he had seen an Indiaman completely wrecked by the force of two waves, the one driving her on shore, and the other shattering her to pieces. He showed me the graves of many wrecked seamen he had helped to bury, one of which, he said, had thirty men in it. The young and most active, he said, were generally drowned first, as they dropped over the sides as soon as the vessel struck ground, believing the sand to be hard, and, as the waves receded very far, they thought they might save themselves by a run. But, unhappily, instead of solid sand they dropped on, it was quicksand, or sand and water, and which carried them out to sea like a rushing river. At this village I saw two remarkable persons. One was a poor demented creature, who preferred being out in all weather, and in gleaning her food from the dung-hills rather than enter the home provided for her, and it was with great difficulty she could be brought home to get a meal, or a change of clothing. When, however, she could be induced to eat at home she ate most voraciously, for I, was witness, on one occasion, to her eating a large, heaped-up dish of potatoes that, I think, could not be far short of a gallon. I have seen her sitting down on a hill, during a drenching shower of rain, as unconcerned as if of no consequence. As her petticoats were ragged at the bottom, all round, as if torn in some curious way, I asked her who tore them so ; she told me it was the wind and the rain, but I afterwards learnt that they were torn by the dogs ; for, as she was exceedingly troublesome to the neighbours in begging for snuff, the dogs were often allowed to molest her. This poor creature, I was informed, was reduced to this sad condition in a singular way. She was, I was told,

a few years previously a sprightly young woman, living as a servant at a public-house in the village. It happened that, on one occasion, when she was up-stairs making the beds, that a deserter entered the house, and, calling for some drink, went into the parlour, where he was speedily followed by an officer of his regiment, and, a moment after, the report of a pistol was heard, and, when the room was entered, the deserter was found dead. The officer said that the soldier had resisted his arrest, which was the cause of his firing, though he only thought of wounding him. As, however, the officer was known to be the soldier's enemy, a trial took place, and, from the evidence given, the case was going very strong against the former. At this juncture the servant girl, Betty, was called to give her evidence. She said that she was upstairs making the beds, and, hearing a *scuffle* below, and then the sound of a gun, she ran down to the parlour and saw the man dead, and the officer standing over him. The word *scuffle*, in Betty's evidence, is said to have saved the officer's life, and as she was much blamed for using this word—for, it seems, there was no scuffle—and she, greatly troubling about it, became in a few days a helpless lunatic. She was at first kept in confinement, but, soon proving harmless, she was consigned to the care of an old couple in the village, and great trouble she seemed to have given them. The other singular person I have alluded to was an old lady, who was reputed to be a *white witch*, one who, from the ill she was believed able to inflict, was regarded by some with superstitious dread. She generally carried a basket about with her, containing all kinds of odds and ends, as well as food, and anything that Aunt Tammy took a fancy too, few who feared her, dared to refuse. I was witness myself to the power of her nimble and abusive tongue on two occasions, and can readily believe that few would like to come under its lash. The first occasion was on Porthleven Pier, where a crowd was assembled in consequence of a poor horse having fallen into the sea. A young man present happened to say to some one near him, 'There is the old witch coming," which Aunt Tammy

happening to hear, at once gave him a bit of her mind in a manner few, I think, could match, for it was so droll and laughable. Among other drolleries she told him that his mother was such a fool that she hung a pound of butter out in the sun to dry. That the reason of his being such a poor doodle was that his mother fed him on flies and potato peelings, and much more of a like kind that I cannot now recollect. The second time that I heard some of her abusive drolleries, was when I went into Helston Court-house one day to hear the trials. The reason, I found, of Aunt Tammy being there was on account of her daughter and another girl, being charged with stealing apples. Before the magistrates made their appearance, Aunt Tammy had stationed herself in the place allotted to delinquents, and on one of the officials telling her she must move to some other place, she opened out upon him in her peculiar style. She seemed to have known his pedigree for generations back, and depicted them and him in a manner that convulsed every one present with laughter. When the magistrates came they were informed of what had taken place, but as she insisted that she had business there, and as they seemingly knew her capability of tongue, she was allowed to remain till her daughter's case was brought on, notwithstanding some curious remarks she made on a previous case. As soon as her daughter was brought in and placed beside her, the old lady gave her such a smacking on the back as to nearly take away her breath. Then, turning to the magistrates, and familiarly calling them by name, she said, "Now, before you begin business, I have something very nice in my basket for you," and, opening it, she presented, in a clean white cloth, a large piece of apple-cake, nicely spread over with clotted cream. The piece of cake was then conveyed, amid much fun and laughter, and presented to the parson, who, very graciously refusing, passed it on to another, and so to all the gentlemen on the bench, and on its being returned back to Aunt Tammy, she very bluntly said, "Well, if you are all too proud to taste an old woman's cake I must eat it myself." Her daughter's case then pro-

ceeded, not without numerous observations of Aunt Tammy, and when the two girls had been found guilty, and condemned to pay the fine of a pound, she, after a few extra slaps on her girl's back, turned round to the magistrates and said, " Well, I have no money to pay the fine, and I tell you what I shall do ; I shall come round to you to-morrow, to see what you are going to give me towards it. I shall first call on Parson Rogers, and I know I shall get something from him, and I believe, after that, none of you will be shabby enough to send me away empty-handed," and, having thus said her say, Aunt Tammy left the court.

I must here state that within a few months of the time I was bound for, I found great difficulty in getting from my master the wages due to me, and was eventually obliged to summon him before the magistrates of Penzance to obtain them. Having succeeded, but knowing it would be equally difficult to obtain them in future, as trade was very bad with my master, my friends got him to give up my indentures. Thus free and my own master, the next question was what was I to do for a living ? The trade of ropemaking was at that time very bad, owing, among other causes, to the introduction of chain as a substitute for rope for a great variety of purposes. Thus, it was very difficult to obtain employment at my trade, unless for a few weeks in the winter when vessels came into the bay disabled and wanting ropes. I was therefore induced by my great-uncle to turn my attention to the fishery as the next alternative ; and obtaining a berth on a pilchard seine I pursued it during the season. But unhappily I could never get over my sea-sickness if the weather was the least rough ; in fact I have been ill at times before I had got on the boat—ill from the apprehension of the evil—and this more especially if there was an easterly wind, for that wind produced on our shores short cross loping waves, the movements of which seemed to turn your intestines over your stomach, and your stomach inside out, and to extract gall enough from your liver to embitter your whole existence. It was, however, owing to this malady, that I was obliged to give up the

fishery, or otherwise I might have become a fisherman for life ; for my uncle, having a large boat and nets of his own, and no child to inherit them, and he, getting up in years, was very desirous of myself becoming qualified to take his place. But this was not to be, and hence the career I am about to record. The seining season being over, I chanced to meet with a carpenter belonging to a village a short distance off, and he knowing me and knowing my mechanical habits made me a favourable offer to come to work with him, which I did for a short time, helping him to saw some wood with the pit-saw, and to do the woodwork of a cottage which he was then erecting. But two or three young carpenters, who were serving their apprenticeship at Penzance, were so exasperated to find that a ropemaker could find employment as a carpenter, that they called upon my employer, and talked of legal consequences, and he, being timidly apprehensive of what might take place, told me that he was sorry in being compelled to break his engagement with me. Thus was I again out of employment. I then made a walking tour of many miles to different towns (going as far as Falmouth) to see if I could get work as a ropemaker, but I was unsuccessful.

Having said thus much of my ropemaking, of my mechanical and other pursuits, it may be necessary to state that I was also fond of reading from a boy, but found great difficulty in procuring instructive books. There was no bookshop in the town—scarcely a newspaper taken in, unless among the few gentry—and there was at that period a considerable number of the adult population who could not read. To the best of my recollection there was only one bookseller's shop in the market town, and, with the exception of Bibles and Prayer Books, spelling-books, and a few religious works, the only books in circulation for the masses were a few story-books and romances, filled with absurdities about giants, spirits, goblins, and supernatural horrors. The price of these, however, precluded me from purchasing any, although I was sometimes enabled to borrow one from an acquaintance. Therefore the Bible, and Prayer and hymn-book, and a few religious

tracts, together with fragments of an old magazine, and occasionally one of the nonsensical pamphlets described, were all the books I ever read till I was upwards of twenty-one years of age. As I could write tolerably well, I had to write love letters for many young neighbours, and some I voluntarily undertook to teach to write, and this helped in some degree my own improvement. But in looking back upon this period of my youth, and contrasting it with the present, and the advantages that young people have in the present age—in the multiplicity of cheap books, newspapers, lectures, and other numerous means of instruction—I cannot help regretting that I was so unfortunately placed ; for, with a desire for knowledge, I had neither books to enlighten nor a teacher to instruct. A young man of my own age was my companion of an evening very frequently during my apprenticeship, but he too like myself was ignorant. Of the causes of day and night, of the seasons, and of the common phenomena of nature we knew nothing, and curious were our speculations regarding them. We had heard of " the sun ruling by day, and the moon by night," but how or in what way they ruled was a mystery we could never solve. With minds thus ignorant, persons need not be surprised that we were very superstitious.

I have already stated that I was brought up to attend very regularly the Methodist chapel, but I never joined their connexion, although I was induced to join for a short time a sect called the Bryanites. I think it was the novelty of their female preachers that first induced me and a young man—my companion—to visit their place of worship ; and being there the persuasive eloquence of two young women caused us to be impressed with the general religious enthusiasm that prevailed among the congregation. We afterwards went to hear them a few times, and became what they called " converted members." But though my companion seems to have acquired in a short time the conviction that his sins were forgiven him, I could never work my imagination up to that point. I was, however, very penitent and sincere

in my devotions; I attended their prayer-meetings and class-meetings very earnestly, and it was only when we learnt that our young female preachers had been turned out of the body—they having fallen from their saintly position by being with child—that I left the connexion. In my frequent visits to the carpenter's shop I have alluded to, I met with an old sea captain of the town, who was there having some work executed, and having often seen me there, entered into conversation with me. He asked me many questions regarding my trade, and eventually pointed out to me the great improbability of the trade of ropemaking ever again affording me constant employment in that part of the country. He told me also of the far greater chances I should meet with in such a place as London; "for," said he, "if you fail of getting work as a ropemaker, there is every opportunity of your getting a berth as a ropemaker aboard an Indiaman, or other large ship, and a ropemaker is at once considered an able seaman." For some time previous to this my home had been rendered uncomfortable to me; for my scanty means of subsistence, my poor mother's very unhappy marriage, and the difficulty of getting employment, all tended to cause the conversation of this old gentleman to make a greater impression on my mind. A consideration therefore of the evil of wasting my youthful days at home in a state of half-starving idleness, and the youthful hope that something advantageous might turn out for me abroad, soon determined me to leave home whenever a favourable opportunity presented itself. But there were two great difficulties to be surmounted. In the first place I had to obtain the consent of my friends, who were very much opposed at first to my leaving home; and I felt a great reluctance to leave in opposition to the wishes of my mother, aunt, and grandmother. In the next place I had no money for such a journey; my friends were too poor to assist me, and the prospect of earning any by my trade was as gloomy as could well be. However, after some weeks had transpired, I obtained from my friends a half-reluctant consent;

for the conviction of my poor old grandmother that she should never see me again, bound me the closer to her heart; and though her sister gave her a room on her premises to live in, and promised otherwise to assist her in my absence, it was with great pain that we eventually parted. I regret to add, that I never saw her again, for she died soon after I left. To raise the pecuniary means for my journey, I went to the next town and, with a few shillings I had raised, I purchased some mahogany veneers and other requisites for making a lady's work-box, with secret drawers, together with a pair of tea-caddies. These I got up in the best style I was master of, and being fortunate enough to dispose of them, together with two or three little trinkets I had by me, I increased by these means my stock of money to about fifty shillings. Having got so much towards my voyage, I commenced another work-box which, when I set out for London, the captain of a small trading vessel agreed to take as part payment of my passage money. Previous to leaving home I had procured two or three letters of recommendation to master ropemakers in London; and with these, and a stout heart, I set out on my voyage of adventure. I left home on the 23rd of June, 1821, and in the course of a few days, I forget how many, for we were becalmed a portion of the time, I arrived in the great city, with the clear sum of thirty shillings in my pocket; knowing no one, nor being known to any. Having heard a great many curious stories in the country, about London crimping-houses, and London thieves, I thought it best to lodge near the wharf at first, till I had become a little acquainted with the place. I was therefore induced to put up at a public-house near the wharf, where the Cornish vessels generally land; and early the next morning I set out with my recommendatory letters. In passing the Borough end of the old London Bridge I recollect being forcibly struck with the number of blackened eyes, and scratched and battered faces, that I met with among the labourers going to their employments; the result, I afterwards learnt, of their Saturday evening and Sunday sprees. Owing, however, to the

general slackness of the ropemaking business at that period, my recommendatory letters failed of procuring me employment; although I found them useful in enabling me to extend the circle of my enquiries, which, to a stranger in London, is no trifling advantage. After canvassing about for nearly a fortnight among all the rope-yards I could hear of and failing of success, I began to think myself very unfortunate. However, I fared very hard and sought about for work in every direction, as I had made up my mind to accept of any kind of honest employment, rather than go home again without any. One evening on my return to my lodgings I met with three countrymen, carpenters by trade. They were, however, strangers to me, but coming from the same county, we soon became acquainted. In the course of conversation with them, I said that I had picked up some slight knowledge of their trade, and that I thought I might be useful in a short time if I could get employment in a shop, or building, at low wages. As they were themselves out of employment they readily agreed that I should go round with them to seek for some; and that if we were fortunate enough to get work together in some building, I should do what I could of the roughest part of it, and should allow them half-a-crown each weekly, in consideration of my not having served any time to the business. To this proposition I readily consented, as I was very anxious to learn the trade, and the following morning we went round together. Two of my companions, however, were fortunate enough to get work in a few days, and I was left with my other partner to shift for ourselves as we best could. My companion was a young man just out of his time, he also had recently come to London, and like myself had very little money. Indeed my own purse was so scanty that I was necessitated to economize so far as to be content with a penny loaf a day and a drink from the most convenient pump for several weeks in succession. We generally got up at five o'clock and walked about enquiring at different shops and buildings till about nine; we then bought one penny loaf and divided it between us; then walked about again till four

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or five in the afternoon, when we finished our day's work with another divided loaf; and very early retired to bed footsore and hungry. My health at that time, however, enabled me to put up with those privations tolerably well, although my stomach often rebelled against them. At that period too, the water at the public-house we lodged at was very bad; the Thames water, being then pumped up by means of large waterworks at the end of old London Bridge, had all kinds of impurities in it when first pumped up, and the smell and taste of it was abominable; and this to me was a disagreeable worse even than hunger. Our landlady, too, had little compassion for those of her lodgers who did not drink, for she would not allow us to cook even a meal of potatoes. One day, however, as we were passing down Drury Lane together, on seeing some carpenters at work I went up to one of them who appeared to be the foreman, to ask if he could give me a job. He said he would, as he wanted some flooring laid in a hurry, and requested me to bring my tools next morning. Having so far succeeded I was anxious to introduce my companion, the person who was to have been my instructor in the business, but from his boyish appearance or some other cause, the foreman would not engage him. This to me was a sad misfortune, to be deprived of the only person who could render me any assistance in this new occupation, for I had never seen any flooring laid, nor, indeed, much work done in the building line. But my low purse and gloomy prospects emboldened me to prepare for the morrow. I had brought from home a hammer, a chisel or two, and a few other trifling tools: to these I added a few more bought at a second-hand tool shop, and a few others borrowed from my companion, I passed a very anxious and sleepness night, and early in the morning away I went to my new occupation, wondering what would be the result. It so happened, however, that fortune favoured me in this instance. I had a very joyous fellow for my partner, and when he took up one end of the board I took up the other, and by watching very carefully all his movements I soon got hold of the method of laying

flooring. I was also fortunate enough to continue in this place till I had replenished my purse to the extent of about fifty shillings. This job having been concluded I was presumptuous enough to go round by myself and seek for another; and in a few days was offered some small staircases to make by the piece, provided I could get a partner to assist me. My young companion, however, had got work in the interim; but meeting at my lodgings with another countryman, who had just arrived in town, we went and took the work together; I agreeing, at the same time, to give my partner half-a-crown a week out of my earnings, and to do the roughest and hardest part of the work. In about a fortnight's time, however, my fellow countryman got sick of London and went home again, leaving me in the midst of my staircase work, and this being one of the most difficult branches of the business, I was obliged to relinquish it, and at a great sacrifice. Having again sought about for employment for a number of weeks, and having failed to secure any, and being at the same time in a half-starved condition, I began to despair of ever learning the business of a carpenter, and at last, very reluctantly, made up my mind to seek for a rope-maker's situation on board some large vessel. Some of the sailors at the wharf having referred me to an old retired sea captain, who made it his business to look out for berths for seamen; he readily engaged to procure me a situation on board an Indiaman for the fee of a few shillings. Within the week I received a note stating that he had been successful, and that I was to meet him and others at a stated place about the final arrangement. Before, however, I went to engage myself, I thought I would go to see two of my fellow townsmen, who had very recently come to London; one of them being the very person whose shop I was in the habit of frequenting at home. He had failed in his business as a master and had come to town to work as a journeyman, and had, in conjunction with another countryman, been fortunate enough to obtain work the first week of their arrival in a small shop in Cromer Street, Somers Town. Being, therefore,

well acquainted with one of those persons, I was desirous of consulting him before I engaged myself as a sailor; for, as I had a great dislike to the sea, I was hopeful that he might have heard of some kind of employment for me. I accordingly went to see him at his place of work, and when I mentioned to him my intention of going to sea he did all he could to dissuade me from it, telling me that it would break my mother's and grandmother's hearts. I informed him how I was situated, and the doubts I entertained of ever getting work at my trade, or of ever getting an opportunity of learning another. The master of the workshop happening to be present, and hearing our conversation, asked me if I thought I could do cabinet work if he employed me. While I was hesitating as to the answer I could give him, my countryman expressed his opinion in the affirmative, and having explained to him what he knew of me, and what work he had seen me do, I was requested to come the following morning and to bring what tools I had with me. This person, being what is called "a trade-working master," gave me at first a portion of his own job to execute, and being fortunate enough to please him he next gave me work on my own account. With this master I continued to work for several months, during which time I acquired some proficiency in making such kinds of furniture as he manufactured; being chiefly cabinets, commodes, loo-tables, and card-tables for the London brokers. We worked by the piece, and the price was low; but long hours, industry and economy, helped me along tolerably well. I was now enabled to provide myself with a few clothes which I was much in want of, a coat in particular: for my dress hitherto was that of a sailor (like most of the young men of my native town at that time), and operated, I believe, very much to my disadvantage in obtaining work in London. During this period I also made myself a tool-chest, and had begun to accumulate a few tools, and should have added others had I been paid my wages regularly; but my employer generally paid us something short of our money every week, and at last got into my debt to the

amount of between six or seven pounds and nearly similar amounts to my two countrymen. One Saturday evening, when pay-time came, he astounded us all by informing us that he should have to go into the Fleet prison the following week for debt. He assured us, however, that he would pay us all the money he owed us when the work was finished which was then in hand, especially if we would go and help to finish it in a workshop which he had taken *within the rules of the prison;* and as some sort of security he gave me one of his beds to take care of, and to the others other articles of furniture. We accordingly went to work for him the following week in a little shop in one of the lanes near the Fleet prison; my old acquaintance, however, did little work, he being a little too fond of drink, my employer otherwise engaged with the view of eventually cheating us all. When the work on hand was completed the two youngest of us received a message from our employer, stating that he wanted to speak with us in the prison. When we went, he very coolly told us that he had no further need of our services. I then very quietly asked him how we were to be paid the money he owed us, on which he gave me a backward push and bade me not insult him in a prison. This, being a little too much for my Cornish blood, was repaid by a blow that sent him to a respectful distance, which led to the interference of an officer, who when he heard how we had been imposed upon, seemed to sympathize with us. My other old countryman he subsequently served still worse, for having sent him some distance into the country, under the plea of collecting money, he not only got the shop cleared of all the furniture made during his absence, but of the old man's tools also; and he, not getting any money, was obliged to travel to town as he best could. I have mentioned that a bed was left in my possession by my employer before he went into prison: this he soon sent a person to demand, but my landlady, in my absence, refused to give it up. Threats having been used respecting it, I deemed it necessary to apply to a magistrate; who, when he heard the case, told me to refer the parties

to him. This I was induced to do, as my employer had sent an old watchman, a friend of his, the night before, to try and capture me after I had gone to bed, and to take me to the watch-house, with a view of frightening me, and causing me to give up the bed. When I heard him, however, I dressed myself quietly, and slipped over the garden wall into the fields at the back, then occupied by smiths' large dust-heaps, and into a soft portion of which I plunged half-way up the body in my hurry to escape. On examining the bed, however, it turned out to be a paltry wool one instead of a feather one, and worth but the merest trifle. Being thus once more out of employment, and without money—for I had to keep myself while I was helping to finish the work referred to—I felt myself worse off in a pecuniary sense than ever, for I owed my landlady a trifle for rent. She, however, soon devised the means of payment, for she caused wood to be purchased, and got me to make her up some furniture, for a mere subsistence, in a back kitchen ; which served me both for bedroom and workshop. This place, being wretchedly damp and unhealthy, soon laid me up with a severe fit of illness, which was so far aggravated by the want of proper food and comforts, as to materially injure my constitution. Having recovered a little from my illness, I procured the loan of a few shillings from a kind old schoolmaster who lodged in the same house, and with these I purchased wood and made up some trifling articles of furniture, which I hawked about to dispose of among the brokers. But I found this a wretched life : for the working and sleeping in my miserable kitchen, and the difficulty of selling what articles I made up at a price to enable me to live, soon caused me to abandon that speculation. With the little knowledge and experience I had now acquired of cabinet-making I resolved to go round and seek work in that line, instead of my former ones of ropemaking and carpentry. After walking about for some days I got employment in a small shop in Castle Street, Oxford Market, a place where repairs of buhl-work, marquetry, and antique furniture were principally executed. Here I was fortunate

enough to meet with a journeyman of the name of David Todd, a native of Peebles, one of the most intelligent, kind-hearted and best disposed men I ever met with. He, finding that I had not served an apprenticeship to the business, not only gave me every assistance and information I required in my work, but advised me as to my best mode of proceeding, with all the benevolence and anxiety of a father. By his advice I was induced to offer myself as a member of the Cabinet-Makers' Society, he having kindly pointed out to me the extreme difficulty I should have of ever obtaining employment in any respectable shop unless I belonged to them. But as I had not "worked or served five years to the business" (as their rules required), and as a jealous countryman of mine had informed them that I had served my time to a ropemaker and not a cabinet-maker, they refused to admit me. Failing in this object, my kind friend got me a situation at Messrs. —— cabinet manufactory, where I entered into an agreement to work for them for twelve months for a guinea a week. They were at that time cabinet-makers to the King, and consequently executed a great variety of work. At the time I am speaking of, this was not a Society shop, and a number of persons were employed there of very drunken and dissipated habits. When I first went among them they talked of "setting Mother Shorney at me"; this is a cant term in the trade, and meant the putting away of your tools, the injuring of your work, and annoying you in such a way as to drive you out of the shop. This feeling against me was occasioned by my coming there to work without having served an apprenticeship to the business. As soon, therefore, as I was made acquainted with their feelings and intentions towards me, I thought it best to call a shop-meeting, and lay my case before them. To call a meeting of this description the first requisite was to send for a quantity of drink (generally a gallon of ale), and then to strike your hammer and holdfast together, which, making a bell-like sound, is a summons causing all in the shop to assemble around your bench. A chairman is then appointed, and you are called upon to state your business. In my case, I

briefly told them that the reason of my calling them together was on account of the feeling they manifested towards me, which I hoped would be removed when they had heard my story. I then went on to describe how I had wasted the prime of my life in learning a trade which I found comparatively useless ; and appealed to their sense of justice to determine whether it was right to prevent me from learning another. By thus appealing to them in time the majority of them took my part, and others were eventually won over and induced to be friendly. But the demands made upon me for drink by individuals among them, for being shown the manner of doing any particular kind of work, together with fines and shop scores, often amounted to seven or eight shillings a week out of my guinea. However, by taking particular notice of every description of work I saw done in the shop, I became tolerably well acquainted with the general run of work by the expiration of my time. Soon after I was engaged I remember that I had to make a work-table, the top of which was made out of what was called " The Wellington Tree of the field of Waterloo," that under the shelter of which the Duke is said to have stood during the early part of the battle. My little table had a silver plate let into the top stating this. When the expiration of my apprenticeship took place I thought myself entitled to an advance of wages ; but the answer to my request being delayed from time to time, and an opportunity presenting itself of obtaining work in another shop in Catherine Street, Strand, at full wages, I thought it wise to embrace it. I may here mention that a great improvement, mentally and morally, has taken place among the working classes of London since that period. There were then comparatively few coffee-houses and eating-houses frequented by working men ; workmen, who worked at a distance from their homes, mostly getting their meals at public-houses. And this great inducement to drink was still further increased by the temptation those places held out, to the young and thoughtless, by the establishment of Singing Clubs and Free-and-Easies—places that I have known to be the de-

struction of many of my shopmates—not from the musical attractions they afforded, but from the habits of drunkenness and dissipation they engendered. Pugilism also, at this period, was patronized by numbers of the nobility and gentry as "a glorious art of self-defence," and those who had acquired the "science!" as it was called, were very prone to display their pugilistic prowess in the public streets, and regular concerted contests might be often witnessed in the fields surrounding London on Sunday mornings, without much danger of interruption from the Bow Street officers. In fact I have seen three pitched battles carried on at one time of a Sunday morning, in Broad Street, St. Giles's, without any one interfering or striving to part them, except their wives, and these occasionally fought with one another. After I had worked about twelve months at two other shops, I was fortunate enough to obtain employment at another cabinet-maker's at Castle Street, Oxford Market—at a place where I worked a sufficient number of years to qualify me for joining the Cabinet-Makers' Society, of which body I was soon after elected a member, and subsequently president. This society is composed of a very respectable body of journeymen, and had then been established for nearly seventy years, an important object of their union, worthy of imitation by others, being the affording of subsistence to their members when out of employment. I may here notice, too, the great improvement that has taken place in cabinet-making during my time, both in English and French furniture. When I first came to London, English-made furniture was generally substantial and well made, but the design was far from elegant and the finish by no means attractive, as most of it was polished with wax or oil; very little French polish being then used. The French furniture—which I had a good opportunity of seeing in the first cabinet shop I worked at—was tastefully designed and elegantly polished, but the work in most cases was very roughly done and far from being substantial. I have repaired cabinets that were veneered with tortoise-shell inlaid with silver, the drawers of which were *nailed together* instead of

being dove-tailed, and which were so loosely and badly fitting that you might pitch them in at a distance. The intercourse since then, however, between the two countries has led to the mutual improvement of both, as our English furniture has greatly improved in design and finish, while that of the French is far more substantial and made in a more workmanlike manner.

CHAPTER II

Owing to the many difficulties I had met with in the way of learning a trade by which to earn my bread, I had hitherto made very little intellectual progress. My provincialisms and bad English being often corrected by the kind old schoolmaster I have referred to, I was induced by his advice to study Lindley Murray's Grammar, and by making it my pocket companion for a few months, and studying it in all my leisure hours, I was enabled to correct some of my glaring imperfections in speaking. That which first stimulated me to intellectual enquiry, and which laid the foundation of what little knowledge I possess, was my being introduced to a small literary association, entitled "The Liberals," which met in Gerrard Street, Newport Market. It was composed chiefly of working men, who paid a small weekly subscription towards the formation of a select library of books for circulation among one another. They met together, if I remember rightly, on two evenings in the week, on one of which occasions they had generally some question for discussion, either literary, political, or metaphysical. It was by the merest accident that I was introduced to one of their discussions by a member, and you may judge of its effects on me when I state that it was the first time that I had ever heard impromptu speaking out of the pulpit—my notions then being that such speaking was a kind of inspiration from God—and also that the question discussed that evening was a metaphysical one respecting the soul. There were very excellent speeches made on that occasion which riveted my most earnest attention, and from what I heard on that evening I felt for the first time in my life how very ignorant I was and how very deficient in being able

to give a reason for the opinions and the hopes I entertained. Seeing that their library contained the works of Paley and other authors that I had often heard cited from the pulpit as the great champions of Christianity, I felt an ardent wish to read and study them. From my friend Mr. Todd, who was present, I received an invitation to attend their next meeting, and being subsequently proposed by him I was very shortly after elected a member. I now became seized with an enthusiastic desire to read and treasure up all I could meet with on the subject of Christianity, and in a short time was induced to join my voice to that of others in its defence whenever the question became the subject of debate ; and often have I sat up till morning dawned reading and preparing myself with arguments in support of its principles. Political questions being also often discussed in our association, caused me to turn my attention to political works, and eventually to take a great interest in the parliamentary debates and questions of the day. In short, my mind seemed to be awakened to a new mental existence ; new feelings, hopes, and aspirations sprang up within me, and every spare moment was devoted to the acquisition of some kind of useful knowledge. I now joined several other associations in its pursuit, and for a number of years seldom took a meal without a book of some description beside me, and to this day relish my meals the better for such an accompaniment. I joined also the Mechanics' Institute, which was just started, and before the present building was erected, and attended its lectures very regularly. I remember being forcibly struck on one occasion, when Dr. Birkbeck was giving some lectures on the senses, on hearing *several dumb boys speak*, which I looked upon for the moment as something miraculous. But the explanation of the doctor soon dissipated the miracle ; for he told us that they were taught by the eye instead of the ear ; first by noticing the action of the mouth and outward movements of the larynx during the pronunciation of vowels and consonants, and trying to imitate the sounds, and then proceeding to words and sentences. They had in this way made such

proficiency that they could readily answer any question asked of them ; indeed, one of them repeated a portion of Gray's Elegy, and that very distinctly, the only defect being in the modulation of the voice, as they could not be brought to distinguish the various tones of it. I remember that on leaving the lecture-room on that occasion I got into conversation with Sir Richard Phillips, the author, and walked with him round and round St. Paul's churchyard, Newgate Street, and the old Bailey for several hours, it being a bright moonlight night, while he explained to me many of his scientific theories, among others one which he entertained in opposition to Sir Isaac Newton's theory of gravitation, Sir Richard illustrating his theory by diagrams made with a piece of chalk on the walls and window shutters. About this time, too, I was very fond of attending debating places, especially Tom's Coffee House, in Holborn, and Lunt's Coffee House, on Clerkenwell Green, where, among other celebrities who took part in the discussions, I heard Gale Jones, the Rev. Robert Taylor, C. Whenman, Richard Carlisle, and others. It was at Lunt's that I first saw George Thompson, the eloquent anti-slavery advocate, and where I think he made his first attempt at public speaking. I commenced also about this time the collection of a small library of my own, the shelves of which were often supplied by cheating the stomach with bread and cheese dinners. But in the midst of these pursuits after knowledge my attention was arrested by a new object, by her who for the last forty-nine years has been my kind and affectionate wife. And regarding that meeting as one of the most fortunate events of my life, I think it well to give its brief history.

My wife is a native of Kent, the daughter of a carpenter formerly in a small way of business at Pegwell, near Ramsgate. Her brother at that period being in business at Boulogne, she went over to be his housekeeper, but on his subsequent marriage she engaged herself as lady's maid in an English family. Having come over to London on a short visit with her mistress, she was in the habit of frequenting Marylebone Church, where she first

attracted my attention on my going there to hear on one occasion the celebrated Dr. Busfield. In a short time I introduced myself to her notice, and, though repulsed at first, was eventually permitted to visit the house and accepted as her future husband. All things now seemed bright and prosperous with me, but a circumstance soon transpired which for a time withered up all my hopes of happiness. This was a difference in our religious views and opinions; one of the universal causes of dissension throughout the world instead of union. My intended wife, having been brought up in the views of the Established Church, regarded its forms and ceremonies with the greatest veneration. I, on the other hand, had been led from my recent studies to look upon practical Christianity as a union for the promotion of brotherly kindness and good deeds to one another, and not a thing of form and profession for mercenary idlers to profit by, who in their miserable interpretations of it too often cause men to neglect the improvement of the present in their aspirations of the future. The explanation of my religious views was called forth by her soliciting me to go with her on the following Sunday to take the sacrament, which, from conscientious motives, I was obliged to refuse. This, as may be supposed, led to some further explanation regarding my religious opinions, for I was resolved to be candid and explicit at all risks, and not subject myself hereafter to the change of subterfuge and hypocrisy. My Mary, having been brought up to regard the sacrament as one of the great essentials of religion, after hearing my opinion, at once candidly declared that she could not conscientiously unite her destinies with any man whose opinions so widely differed from her own. This avowal I felt with the severest anguish; and our parting that evening was to me like the parting of the mental and bodily powers. I tried to summon some little philosophy to my aid, but philosophy I believe has little control over this strong and powerful passion; and months elapsed before I recovered sufficiently from the shock to resume quietly my usual avocations. In order, however, to divert

my mind as much as possible from the object that so affected me, I went and joined several associations ; literary, scientific, and political. At one or other of these I spent my evenings, and in this way I believe profited to some extent ; although I have since regretted I never went through a regular course of study. And this means of diverting the mind from the object that preys upon it, I would venture to recommend to all those who may experience a similar heart-rending disappointment ; for such pursuits serve to excite and strengthen one set of faculties to enable them to overcome the force of another. At all events, between active labour by day, and a variety of intellectual pursuits of an evening, I had so far subdued my feelings in the course of twelve months, that I began to plan out for myself the life of a bachelor. On returning from my work, however, one evening I found a little letter which soon dissipated that notion. It informed me that the writer, having again arrived at Dover with her mistress for a few days, had presumed to send me the compliments of the season (it being Christmas time), and at the same time hoped that my opinions on the subject of the sacrament had undergone a change. This opened up between us a kind of controversial correspondence on the subject—she having shortly after gone back to Boulogne —the result of which was that our religious opinions became perfectly satisfactory to one another, and terminated by her coming over to England and accepting me as her husband, we being married on the 3rd of June, 1826.* In the interim, however, I had provided for this event as far as possible, by making my own furniture, and by otherwise providing for her a comfortable home. I need scarcely say that on my marriage I gave up the different associations I had been connected with ; as well from motives of economy as from a desire to make my home a place of happiness. Perceiving also that much of the bickerings and dissensions often found in the domestic circle had their origin in the wife's not understanding and

* This correspondence we thought it well to burn when I was drawn for the militia, fearing it might get into strange hands.

appreciating her husband's political or literary pursuits; too often coupled with his carelessness and indifference in enlightening and instructing her regarding them; I resolved, if possible, to avoid this evil by pursuing an opposite course of conduct. My chief recreation at this period was in reading; my meal hours and my evenings being earnestly devoted to the attainment of some description of knowledge. Soon after my marriage I began also my first attempts in writing short pieces for the press. In all these matters I sought to interest my wife, by reading and explaining to her the various subjects that came before us, as well as the political topics of the day. I sought also to convince her that, beyond the pleasure knowledge conferred on ourselves, we had a duty to perform in endeavouring to use it wisely for others. I endeavoured to make her understand how much of our social improvement and political progress had depended on past sacrifices and sufferings on the part of our forefathers, and how much the happiness of the future will depend on each and all of us doing our duty in the present as our brave old forefathers had done. And in looking back upon this period how often have I found cause for satisfaction that I pursued this course, as my wife's appreciation of my humble exertions has ever been the chief hope to cheer, and best aid to sustain me, under the many difficulties and trials I have encountered in my political career. She has ever been to me

> "A guardian angel o'er my life presiding,
> Doubling my pleasure and my cares dividing."

When I married her she was a tall, handsome, fresh-coloured girl; but she, having received a push in the back from her sister when young, received an injury to her spine. The appearance of it was scarcely perceptible for many years, but when she began to have children her spine began to give way, so that now in her old age she is about a head shorter than when I married her. For two years after my marriage I was in good employment, at a cabinet-maker's in St. Paul's Churchyard. Having

now got all our little household comforts about us, and a few pounds in our possession, my wife was desirous of getting into some small way of business that she herself could manage; in the hopes of making some little provision for the sickness that might happen, and for the old age and infirmities sooner or later almost sure to overtake us. An acquaintance of mine, having recently commenced the business of a pastry-cook and confectioner, proposed to us that if we could take a small shop in some thoroughfare, and commence that line of business he would serve us on very advantageous terms. Thinking his terms favourable we agreed to try the experiment. We accordingly took a small shop in May's Buildings, St. Martins Lane, which we fitted up and stocked to the extent of our means. Our sale, however, not being such as my friend of large promise expected, he very soon refused to supply our small demands for his goods. This disappointment at the commencement of our speculation entailed on us a great inconvenience as well as loss; for we had to look out for others to serve us on less favourable terms. To still further help us down the hill I was laid up soon after our opening with the ague; a disease which I caught by lodging near the marshes at Plumstead, having been working at a gentleman's house in that neighbourhood. In the midst of it also my poor wife was put to bed with her second child; and, what with care, anxiety, and bad living, was soon laid up on a bed of sickness. We left this wretched place as soon as we conveniently could, but not before we had exhausted all our own little means, and had involved ourselves in debt; the hopes of its improvement having allured us on.

A short time before I had embarked on the business referred to, I was induced to join the First London Co-operative Trading Association; a society first established in the premises of the Co-operative Society, Red Lion Square, and subsequently removed to Jerusalem Passage, Clerkenwell. I think it was about the close of the year 1828 that the first of those trading associations was established at Brighton, by a person of the name of Bryan;

and its success was such that between four and five hundred similar associations were very soon established in different parts of the country. The members of those societies subscribed a small weekly sum for the raising of a common fund, with which they opened a general store, containing such articles of food, clothing, books, etc., as were most in request among working men ; the profits of which were added to the common stock. As their funds increased some of them employed their members ; such as shoemakers, tailors, and other domestic trades : paying them journeymen's wages, and adding the profits to their funds. Many of them were also enabled by these means to raise sufficient capital to commence manufactures on a small scale ; such as broadcloths, silk, linen, and worsted goods, shoes, hats, cutlery, furniture, etc. Some few months after I had given up my shop in May's Buildings, I was induced to accept the situation of store-keeper to the "First London Association," the late store-keeper, Mr. James Watson, having resigned. In taking this step I made some little sacrifice, as the salary they offered was less than I could earn at my trade. But, like many others, I was sanguine that those associations formed the first step towards the social independence of the labouring classes, and I was disposed to exert all my energies to aid in the work. I was induced to believe that the gradual accumulation of capital by these means would enable the working classes to form themselves into joint stock associations of labour, by which (with industry, skill, and knowledge) they might ultimately have the trade, manufactures, and commerce of the country in their own hands. But I failed to perceive that the great majority of them lacked the self sacrifices and economy necessary for procuring capital, the discrimination to place the right men in the right position for managing, the plodding industry, skill, and knowledge necessary for successful management, the moral disposition to labour earnestly for the general good, and the brotherly fellowship and confidence in one another for making their association effective.

I had not, however, been in the situation of store-keeper

many months before a reduction in my salary took place, the business not answering the expectation of members. My wife was next requested to attend to the store at half the salary I had engaged for. Being thus out of employment myself, and my own trade being exceedingly dull, I employed myself for some months in making a model of an industrial village for the late J. Minter Morgan, author of the "Revolt of the Bees," the "Reproof of Brutus," etc. A shop of work, however, being offered me before it was in any way finished, the model was never completed.

At this period, too, our troubles were further increased by the death of my second child, my little Kezia, from an accident. My eldest child also became so weakly that we were necessitated to send her into the country, to her grandfather's, for about two years.

In returning, however, to the formation of those societies I must mention that, as our association was the first formed in London, it was looked up to for information and advice from all parts of the country. This, entailing much labour, led to the formation of another society, entitled "The British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge." As, also, several of those societies had commenced manufactures on a small scale, they were anxious for some depot, or place in London, where their productions might be deposited for sale to the public, or for exchange with one another. This desire induced the British Association to take a large house in 19, Greville Street, Hatton Garden, the first floor of which was fitted up as a co-operative bazaar, the lower portion being occupied by our First London Association.

The first secretary of the British Association was Mr. George Skene, and, subsequently, on his resignation, I became its honorary secretary. This association kept up the necessary corespondence with the country, held public meetings from time to time, and published several reports of its proceedings. Lady Byron (who took a great interest in these associations), having placed at the disposal of the British Association a small capital—£100—for helping some of the Spitalfields weavers, who were out of work, to manu-

facture some silk handkerchiefs. This, also, was managed by the secretary, Mr. Skene. Those societies, from the establishment of which so much had been expected, were, however, in the course of three or four years mostly all broken up, and with them the British Association. The chief, or, at least, the most prominent causes of their failure were religious differences, the want of legal security, and the dislike which the women had to confine their dealings to one shop. The question of *religion* was not productive of much dissension until Mr. Owen's return from America, when his "Sunday Morning Lectures" excited the alarm of the religious portion of their members, and caused great numbers to secede from them. The want of *legal security* was also the cause of failure, as they could not obtain the ordinary legal redress when their officers, or servants, robbed, or defrauded them, the magistrates refusing to interfere on the ground of their not being legalized, or *enrolled societies*. The prejudice of the members' wives against their stores was, no doubt, another cause of failure. Whether it was their love of shopping, or their dislike that their husbands should be made acquainted with the exact extent of their dealings, which were booked against them, I know not, but certain it was that they often left the unadulterated and genuine article in search of that which was often questionable. When Mr. Owen first came over from America he looked somewhat coolly on those "Trading Associations," and very candidly declared that their mere buying and selling formed no part of his grand "co-operative scheme"; but when he found that great numbers among them were disposed to entertain many of his views, he took them more in favour, and ultimately took an active part among them. And here I think it is necessary to state that I entertain the highest respect for Mr. Owen's warm benevolence and generous intentions, however I may differ from many of his views; and this respect, I think, most people will be disposed to accord to him, who know that he devoted a large fortune and a long life in reiterated efforts to improve the condition of his fellow men. I must confess, also, that I was one of those who,

at one time, was favourably impressed with many of Mr. Owen's views, and, more especially, with those of a *community of property*. This notion has a peculiar attraction for the plodding, toiling, ill-remunerated sons and daughters of labour. The idea of all the powers of machinery, of all the arts and inventions of men, being applied for the benefit of all in common, to the lightening of their toil and the increase of their comforts, is one the most captivating to those who accept the idea without investigation. The prospect of having spacious halls, gardens, libraries, and museums at their command; of having light alternate labour in field or factory; of seeing their children educated, provided and cared for at the public expense; of having no fear or care of poverty themselves; nor for wife, children, or friends they might leave behind them; is one the most cheering and consolatory to an enthusiastic mind. I was one who accepted this grand idea of machinery working for the benefit of all, without considering that those powers and inventions have been chiefly called forth, and industriously and efficiently applied by the stimulus *our industrial system has afforded*, and that the benefits to the originators and successful workers of them—though large in some instances—have been few and trifling, compared to the benefits *which the millions now enjoy from their general application*. Those great results, too, have hitherto been realized by the hope of wealth, fame, or station, *keeping up man's energies to the tension point*. But who can foresee what human beings may become when the *individualism* in their nature is checked by education, and endeavoured to be crushed out of them by the mandate of a majority—and, it may be, that majority not always a reasonable and enlightened one. What may become of man's inventions when some plodding, persevering schemer (content to starve in his closet in hopes of perfecting a project that may win him fame and benefit his country) is peremptorily called upon to abandon his hopes and yield to the bidding of authority? What even may become of the best portion of man's nature (of his industrial, skilful, persevering, saving energies), when some aspiring, hopeful individual, resolv-

ing to labour and to save while youth and vigour favour him, in hopes of realizing leisure and independence, or to procure some cherished object of his heart, is constrained to abandon his resolution, to conform to the routine of the majority, and to make their aspirations the standard of his own? Of what advantage the splendour and enjoyment of all art and nature *if man has no choice of enjoyment*? And what to him would be spacious halls, and luxurious apartments, and all the promised blessings of a community, if he must rise, work, dress, occupy, and enjoy, not as he himself desires, *but as the fiat of the majority wills it*? Surely the poorest labourer, bowed down with toil and poverty, would have reason to bless the *individualism* that gave him some freedom of choice, and a chance of improving his lot, compared with a fellowship that so bound him in bondage. But we shall be told of the perfect and wise arrangements that are so to perfect human character, that no man "shall ever need to be blamed for his conduct," nor men ever have occasion to make their fellows "responsible for their actions." Unfortunately, the great obstacle to the realization of this perfect state of things is, that the perfect and wise arrangements are to depend *on imperfect men and women*. And though much is to be expected from an improved system of teaching and training, it is very doubtful, even by these helps, if they will so far succeed in perfecting human organizations that no ill-balanced ones shall be found among them to mar the general welfare; to need not the enactment of laws to deter and control them, and the necessity for some tribunal to make them responsible for their conduct. But though mature reflection has caused me to have lost faith in "a *Community of Property*," I have not lost faith in the great benefits that may yet be realized by a wise and judicious system of *Co-operation in the Production of Wealth*. The former I believe to be unjust, unnatural, and despotic in its tendency, a sacrificing of the intellectual energies and moral virtues of the few, to the indolence, ignorance and despotism of the many. The latter I believe to be in accordance with wisdom and justice, an arrangement by

which small means and united efforts may yet be made the instruments for upraising the multitude in knowledge, prosperity, and freedom.*

I am satisfied, however, that much good resulted from the formation of those co-operative trading associations, notwithstanding their failure. Their being able to purchase pure and unadulterated articles of food; their manufacturing and exchanging with one another various articles which they were induced to make up in their leisure hours, or when out of employment; the mental and moral improvement derived from their various meetings and discussions, were among the advantages that resulted from them.

And while speaking of the failure of our co-operative trading associations at that period, I think it may be interesting to some if I give them a brief account of the failure of the Community of New Harmony as communicated to me by M. D'Arusment, Fanny Wright's husband—on one occasion when he took tea with me. He stated that the chief cause of failure was bad management; persons being appointed to superintend or manage different departments, of which they had no practical knowledge; and chiefly because they professed to believe in Mr. Owen's views. That instead of first seeking to raise the substantial necessaries and comforts of life, on which their success would mainly depend, the members were more intent on hearing lectures on the New System, or in reading, dancing and amusement. Among the illustrations of bad management, he gave me the following. He said that the Rappists, the former proprietors, who had shown themselves to be very successful farmers, had very conveniently divided the land into necessary portions, very carefully fenced. These divisions, however, in Mr. Owen's opinion, looked too much like the old world's system, and he ordered the fences to be removed. The consequence of this was that the pigs of the neighbourhood, which were allowed to roam the lanes and forests, had only to get through one fence

* Since this was written numerous co-operative associations have been started on the old plan.

to be able to rove over a great portion of the estate, and to obtain their choice of the crops, instead of being restricted to a small field if they broke in. Persons, he said, were put to manage agricultural operations who had no practical knowledge of them; and so in like manner in many other departments. Many intelligent members saw this folly, and greatly lamented it; but the generality of them had such faith in Mr. Owen's knowledge of the system, that nothing was done to check the evil till it was too late. He said, if you spoke to any of those blind disciples about this bad management, the reply generally was: "Ah! we see only a link or two in the great chain, whereas Mr. Owen comprehends the whole. The system is his, and he has so much knowledge, and so much experience, that we have best have faith in him, and wait for the result." One of these men, he said, a warm-hearted enthusiast, to whom he had often spoken about the management, and who had the fullest faith in Mr. Owen, was so stunned and heart-broken when the truth of failure and insolvency was made known to him, that he went into the woods and hung himself. I must state, however, that Mr. D'Arusment told me these matters with regretful feelings, and at the same time avowed his belief, that they would have got on very well if the affair had been so managed as to provide them with food and clothing.

About 1832 Mr. William King put forth a proposal for the establishing of exchange bazaars upon a different and more extended plan than that of Greville Street, and subsequently by the co-operation of his friends succeeded in establishing one in Portland Road, and another at the Gothic Hall, New Road. By this plan, *Exchange or Labour Notes* were issued to the depositor of any article in the Bazaar to the extent of its value, which notes were again taken for any article the depositor wanted out of it. This plan was eminently successful for a short period, until in fact the amount of the ornamental, and comparatively useless articles which had accumulated in the bazaar, preponderated greatly over the useful; then it was that the notes that had been issued *began to be depreciated*, and

useful articles soon ceased to be deposited. Before, however, this cause of failure was discovered, Mr. Owen's friends and supporters were very anxious that he also should form one of those exchange bazaars upon a large scale. To facilitate the project, the proprietor of some very extensive premises in Gray's Inn Road, offered the use of them gratuitously to Mr. Owen for one year, to try the experiment; after which, if successful, they were to be purchased for a stipulated sum. The proposal being accepted the place was opened as "The Institution of the Industrious Classes." A very influential council was also appointed to co-operate with Mr. Owen in the management and a sum of money subscribed towards the objects contemplated; namely, an exchange bazaar, an infant school, and an incipient community. Great assistance being anticipated from the various trading associations, established throughout the country, the use of the premises was offered to them for the holding of their third congress; they having previously held one at Manchester, and another at Huddersfield. This congress was subsequently held there, and was attended by delegates from between sixty and seventy different societies, among whom I was one. We held two very crowded public meetings, and continued the business of the congress for six consecutive days. We had much talk, but did very little business; the chief object of interest to many (that of forming an incipient community upon the plan of Mr. Thompson, of Cork) being stoutly opposed and finally marred by our friend Mr. Owen. The Exchange Bazaar was ultimately opened by Mr. Owen and his council, and for a time promised success, until in fact "the labour notes" began to be depreciated. Its failure was also accelerated by bad management; and finally by a rupture between the proprietor of the building and Mr. Owen.

And here I must give a couple of anecdotes regarding Mr. Owen, showing how anti-democratic he was notwithstanding the extreme doctrines he advocated. We, having resolved to call the Co-operative Congress referred to, issued, among other invitations, a circular inviting the

attendance of Members of Parliament. Mr. Owen, having seen a copy of the circular drawn up, conceived that it did not sufficiently express his peculiar views. He therefore sent an amendment, which he wished added to it, on to our meeting by Mr. J. D. Styles. The committee having discussed the amendment, rejected it, and then sent the circular on to Mr. Hetherington's to be printed. When Mr. Owen heard of this, he sent Mr. Bromley, the proprietor of the Exchange Bazaar, to tell Mr. Hetherington that his amendment must be added, This at first Mr. Hetherington refused to do, but on Bromley swearing that the Congress should not meet at his place unless he did add it, he began to think it a very serious affair, as the meeting was to take place in a few days ; we had incurred great expenses, and had no means of taking another place. He therefore told Bromley, that if Mr. Owen sent him a letter authorizing him to insert it, and took the blame on himself, he would add the amendment. Judge, therefore, of our great surprise when the circulars were brought to our meeting, embodying the rejected amendment. After Hetherington's explanation, it was resolved that a deputation, consisting of Messrs. Lovett, Flather, and Powell, be appointed to go and expostulate with Mr. Owen. We went, and were shown into Mr. Owen's room at the bazaar, and after briefly introducing our business, he told us to be seated, as he had something very important to read to us. This something was the *proof* of a publication just started, called the *Crisis*. After he had read to us a large portion of what he had written in it, I found my patience giving way, and at the next pause I took the opportunity of asking him what that had to do with the business we had come about ? I began by telling him of his having submitted an amendment to our circular, of the committee rejecting it by a large majority, and of his taking upon himself to authorize its insertion in the circular notwithstanding ; and concluded by asking him whether such conduct was not highly despotic ? With the greatest composure he answered that it evidently was despotic ; but as we, as well as the committee that sent us, were

all ignorant of his plans, and of the objects he had in view, we must consent to be ruled by despots till we had acquired sufficient knowledge to govern ourselves. After such vain-glorious avowal, what could we say but to report —in the phraseology of one of the deputation—that we had been flabbergasted by him ?

In a previous page I have stated that the proposal to establish an incipient community upon Mr. Thompson's plan, was opposed and marred by Mr. Owen. It was in this curious manner. After the proposal was discussed for some time, for commencing a community upon the small scale proposed by Mr. Thompson, instead of waiting for the grand plan of Mr. Owen, we retired for dinner. When we came back our friend Owen told us very solemnly, in the course of a long speech, that if we were resolved to go into a community upon Mr. Thompson's plan, we must make up our minds *to dissolve our present marriage connections, and go into it as single men and women.* This was like the bursting of a bomb-shell in the midst of us. One after another, who had been ardently anxious for this proposal of a community, began to express doubts, or to flatly declare that they could never consent to it ; while others declared that the living in a community need not interfere in any way with the marriage question. One poor fellow, Mr. Petrie, an enthusiast in his way, quite agreed with his brother Owen, and made a speech which many blushed to hear, and contended that it would make no difference, as he and his wife were concerned, for she would follow him anywhere. He then little thought, poor man, that her virtue and his philosophy would so soon be put to the test, and that his mental powers would give way before it, for so it happened soon after. However, nothing could have been better devised than this speech of Mr. Owen to sow the seeds of doubt, and to cause the scheme to be abortive ; and when we retired Mr. Thompson expressed himself very strongly against his conduct. I may add that the reporter of our proceedings, Mr. Wm. Carpenter, thought it wise not to embody this discussion in our printed report.

At the time that I held the situation of store-keeper at Greville Street, I was (in conjunction with two other persons) served with an exchequer writ, for selling, in ignorance of our "knowledge restricting laws," a small pamphlet on which *the duty had not been paid*. And as our aristocratic rulers and their tools have often recourse to very round-about ways for entrapping their victims, it may be well to state the way in which we were nearly caught in the meshes of this paltry law; a law, I believe, devised by old Sidmouth, of knowledge-gagging memory. Among the customers who visited our bazaar and store, was a portly old farmer-looking gentleman, who manifested a great anxiety to know everything relating to our co-operative trading associations. He told us that he had already heard enough about them to make him desirous of opening a store in his own village for the benefit of his labourers, and others living in the vicinity; but still he wanted further information respecting their proceedings. As a member of the "British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge," I thought it my duty to give so benevolent an individual all the information I could, and as we sold in our store a great variety of books and pamphlets on the subject of co-operation, I showed him our assortment. From among them he selected two or three copies of our *quarterly reports* and a few other pamphlets, and went away, as we thought, brimful of zeal in the cause. In a few days he called on us again, and informed us that he had been reading our reports and pamphlets, and found from them that some of our members were very great radicals, more especially Lovett, Fosket, and some others whom he named. When I informed him that I was one of the radicals he referred to, he affected great surprise, and said that he believed I should find it very difficult to defend some of the extreme opinions I entertained before a jury. I told him that I thought radicalism, as well as all principles based on justice, were very easily defended, the difficulties being on the other side of the question; for when political inequality, hereditary privilege, unjust possessions,

and injustice in law and government, had to be defended in the face of justice, honesty, and common sense, there might be some difficulty in substantiating their claims, and more especially if there was an honest jury in the box. Some further discussion took place between us, and on leaving he told us that he should have something further to say to us in a few days. This something appeared in the form of *an exchequer writ* from Somerset House, which on his information had been forwarded to us. It seemed to set forth some great offence committed against the State, yet noways enlightening us regarding the precise nature of that offence, the mystery or enigma being left for offenders to solve as they best could, generally done through the instrumentality of their legal advisers. In our ignorance of the offence we had committed, we began to examine the different commodities in our store to see if we had been guilty of selling anything without the proper licence ; but we found that for all things requiring it we had the proper document. During our investigation Mr. Hetherington chanced to come into our store, and he joined with us in trying to find out the cause of our offence, and but for him we should probably have remained ignorant ; for in looking over our stock of books, he found out that one of the *quarterly reports* of the British Association was on a sheet and a quarter of paper, and on which *quarter of a sheet* the law required a pamphlet duty of *one shilling* to be paid, which duty the printer in his ignorance or neglect had forgotten. Having found out what we thought to be the cause of the information laid against us, Mr. Hetherington and myself walked down to Somerset House to see if we were right in our surmises. The right department in this great taxing machinery having been found, we presented our slip of paper, and requested the person in attendance to inform us what had induced them to send us that document. He referred to a pile of papers, and told us that an information had been laid against us for having published a pamphlet without having paid the required duty. We then informed him that the parties

named in the writ were not the publishers of the pamphlet, and that he had consequently sent it to the wrong parties. The fact was it was published for the British Association, a distinct body from the East London Co-operative Association, whose trustees they had sent the writ to, the informer having seen their names over the shop door ; but this information we did not think it necessary to give him. He then wanted to know the nature of the First London Society, and the kind of articles we sold. On which Mr. Hetherington began to reckon up the miscellaneous articles we dealt in, rather humourously contrasting bacon with snuff, butter with books, mustard with raisins, etc., which could not but excite the risible faculties of his questioner. This person then very authoritatively declared that we were liable to a heavy penalty for having vended the pamphlet. We then called his attention to the fact that we bought a variety of books and pamphlets from different persons, and that there was nothing printed on them to indicate whether the duty was paid or not ; and, as it was the business of the printer to pay the pamphlet duty, it was evidently a great injustice to visit his offence upon the vendor. He concluded that as the writ had been issued nothing could be done in our favour unless we laid our case before *the Board*. We accordingly drew up a statement for these gentlemen, in which we informed them that as their clerks had made a great mistake in issuing out a writ against us instead of some other persons, we hoped that they would rectify the error, so that we should be subject to no loss. In a few days we received a letter from them, stating that they had considered our *petition*, and had mitigated the penalties against us to ten pounds ! To this we replied that the board had made a very great mistake in supposing our explanation about their clerks to be " a petition." That not having committed any offence we had not petitioned, and that consequently we should pay no penalties. After this we heard no more of the affair ; but we frequently saw our farmer friend about the Stamp Office and Court of Exchequer, and on enquiry learnt that he was one of their common informers.

CHAPTER III

About the same period that I joined the Co-operative Trading Associations I became acquainted with Messrs. Cleave, Hetherington, and Watson, three men with whom I laboured politically and socially for a period of nearly twenty years; some account of these labours in various ways will be met with as I proceed with my story.* A little before this time, however, I was introduced to Mr. Henry Hunt and a number of other radicals, who were then united with him in seeking to effect a reform in

* Mr. Henry Hetherington, the great champion of the unstamped press, was a native of London, and born in Compton Street, Soho, in the year 1792. I became acquainted with him some time before he commenced the publication of the *Poor Man's Guardian*, an event which gave rise to the unstamped warfare, and which gave birth to the cheap literature we so much enjoy. It was his firm determination and unflinching courage, that no punishment could daunt, that caused that warfare to be successful, though many others helped, and suffered in the fray.

Mr. James Watson, a seller of the unstamped, and publisher of many liberal works, was a native of New Malton, in Yorkshire, and was born on the 21st September, 1799. I first met with him at the Old Co-operative Society Rooms, Red Lion Square. He first came to town to take charge of Richard Carlisle's shop in Fleet Street, when the government prosecution was so hot against him for selling Paine's works. I have taken part in many associations with him, and I know of no politician I could better repose confidence in. Independent of his efforts and sacrifices in the cause of the unstamped, he rendered good service to the cause of progress by the great number of political and other useful works which he printed and published.

Mr. John Cleave, bookseller and publisher, was I think about the same age as Hetherington, but the place of his birth I cannot now recollect. He had been, I think, a sailor in early life, and had much of the sailor in his bearing. He was also rude and bluff in his manner at times, but he had a warm and generous heart; always ready to aid the good cause, and to lend a helping hand to the extent of his means. He laboured hard, and made great sacrifices in freeing the press from the stamps that fettered it.

Parliament. Soon after I became acquainted with him, Mr. Hetherington, myself, and some other friends sought to effect a reconciliation between him and the celebrated Mr. W. Cobbett; but the feud between them was too strong for us to be successful. Mr. Cobbett denounced the despotism of Mr. Hunt, and Mr. Hunt spoke bitterly of the cowardice of Mr. Cobbett. The memory, however, of those two earnest men I strongly cherish; for, without seeking to extenuate the failings of either, I regard them as two noble champions of the rights of the millions; men who by speaking, writing, and suffering, stamped the necessity *for reform* so deeply into the heart and mind of England, that no effort of corruption will ever again be able to eradicate it, until all our institutions have been purged and reformed even to the very roots. How few of the politicians of the present day are able to estimate how much of their own views and opinions they owe to Mr. Cobbett's long teaching of the multitude, and how many of the reforms that have been effected in England since the days of Castlereagh and Sidmouth, are justly to be attributed to the public opinion he helped to create. When Henry Hunt, too, first stood forward as the champion of reform, it needed a man of his nerve and moral daring to face the formidable phalanx of corruption everywhere allied against every one who presumed to talk of the rights of man. But he went nobly onward with his work of appealing to the good sense and sound feeling of the people, being deterred not by the sabres of Peterloo, nor by threats, sneers, nor imprisonment, till he finally obtained the verdict of his country against the corruptions he assailed. The Whig Reform Bill was that verdict, a measure, the enactment of which, admitted the corruptions of our representative system, though its provisions went rather to palliate than to effectually remove them; and greatly is it to be regretted that Mr. Hunt, in contending stoutly for an efficient measure of reform, in opposition to the short-comings of that Bill, found himself abused and deserted by the great majority of those whom he sought to enfranchise. And from the last conversation I had

with this warm-hearted friend of the millions, I am induced to believe that it was this injustice and ingratitude that struck him to the heart.* For some years, however, previous to this event, I continued to take part in the reform exertions of Mr. Hunt and his friends, and was among those who assisted in getting up the large public meeting at the Eagle Tavern, City Road, in March, 1830, for the formation of "the Metropolitan Political Union." Mr. O'Connell was in the chair on that occasion, and the meeting was, I believe, the first public meeting he ever addressed in London. The chief object of that union was "to obtain by every just, legal, constitutional, and peaceful means, an effectual and radical reform in the Commons House of Parliament." I was one of the council of that body, and continued to take an active part in it until what was called "the three glorious days" of the French revolution; but having taken part at a public meeting at the Rotunda in celebration of that event, in conjunction with Mr. Hetherington, Gale, Jones, George Thompson, and others, our proceedings were thought, in the opinion of some members of our council, to savour of sedition. The subject being brought before them on the following evening, Mr. Hetherington and myself contended that the spirit of the meeting was such as an oppressed and tax-ridden people should exhibit when they hear of despots being hurled from their pinnacle of power. This caused

* The following sketch, drawn by an opponent—*Blackwood's Magazine*—will give some idea of Henry Hunt's treatment in the House of Commons:—"A comely, tall, rosy, white-headed mean-looking, well-gartered tradesman of, I take it, 60; nothing about him could detain the eye for a second, if one did not know who he was. His only merits are his impudence and his voice, the former certainly first rate, the latter, as far as power goes, unique. In vain do all sides of the house unite, cough, and shuffle, and groan, and Door, door! and Bar, bar! to drown him; in vain Spoke, spoke! Mr. Speaker! Order there! I rise! Spoke! Question, question! Chair, chair! In vain is it all; he pauses for a moment, until the unanimous clamour of disgust is at its height, and then, re-pitching his notes, apparently without an effort, lifts his halloo as clear and distinct above the storm, as ever ye heard a minster bell tolling over the racket of a village wake."

our chairman, for the time being,* to declare that he could not continue to be a member with men capable of entertaining such sentiments ; and we on our part, not approving of such timidity, thought it well to withdraw from among them.

Shortly before this affair I became greatly interested in the temperance question, and did what I could in various ways to promote it. Among other modes I drew up, as early as 1829, a petition for the opening of the British Museum, and other exhibitions of Art and Nature, on Sundays. The petition was signed by many thousand persons, and was presented to Parliament by Mr. Hume. A few extracts from it will convey its spirit and intent : "Your petitioners consider that one of the principal causes of drunkenness and dissipation on the Sabbath is the want of recreation and amusement. Sunday being the only leisure day for working men, they are naturally induced on that day to seek that recreation and enjoyment from which they are precluded during the week. So far, however, from there being facilities provided for the rational enjoyment of working men on that day, even their most innocent pleasures (from mistaken feelings of religion) are rigorously prohibited ; there is no place of public resort in this metropolis (open on Sundays) where amusement and instruction are blended, or where working men could be led to admire and comprehend the wonderful combinations of nature and art. It is therefore not surprising that the injunctions delivered from the pulpit are often disregarded, or that labouring men seek relief from religious instruction in the oblivious and demoralizing sociality of the ale-house, which, unfortunately, too often terminates in drunkenness. Your petitioners are further convinced that many of their labouring fellow countrymen who frequent those haunts of vice and dissipation on Sundays are tempted to spend their leisure hours in this objectionable manner, more from a desire of participating in agreeable pastime than from a love of drink ; thus they imperceptibly contract bad habits, and from merely sipping

* Mr. George Rogers, a well-intentioned man, notwithstanding.

in the first instance the intoxicating poison, they ultimately become actively vicious, and often to fall a prey to pauperism and crime. Your petitioners suggest to your Honourable House that the best remedy for drunkenness at all times, is to divert and inform the mind, and to circulate sound knowledge among the people, so that their minds may be profitably engaged, and a public opinion in favour of sobriety may be generated. That attention to those suggestions would do more towards wiping from our national character the stain of drunkenness than prohibitory laws or coercive measures. That if useful knowledge was extensively disseminated among the industrious classes, if they were encouraged to admire the beauties of nature, to cultivate a taste for the arts and sciences, to seek for rational instruction and amusement, it would soon be found that their vicious habits would yield to more rational pursuits ; man would become the friend and lover of his species, his mind would be strengthened and fortified against the allurements of vice ; he would become a better citizen in this world, and be better qualified to enjoy happiness in any future state of existence. In other countries in Europe every facility is afforded on Sundays for the rational recreation of the industrious population. Music, the museums, and public libraries, all display their attractions, and so far from the innocent diversions and gaiety of the people leading to vice and immorality, the mass of the working population of those countries are confessedly more sober and moral than the same class of persons in our own religious country." I may now add that the forty-six years that have elapsed since the foregoing was written, have only tended to strengthen my conviction that no more effectual means for the removal of drunkenness could be provided than the opening of our museums, our mechanic and scientific institutions, our libraries, and all our exhibitions of art and nature on Sunday, the only day our working population have to enjoy them, and by giving every facility and encouragement for persons deliver ing scientific, historical, and every description of instruc tive lectures to the mass of the people on that day.

In 1830 I became connected with the "Unstamped Agitation," one of the most important political movements that I was ever associated with. This unstamped warfare had its commencement in the publication of *The Poor Man's Guardian*, by Mr. Henry Hetherington; although the idea of publishing a substitute for a newspaper, in such a manner as to evade Castlereagh's Act, first originated with Mr. William Carpenter. This last gentleman, a well-known author and editor who has been connected with most of the political movements of the last twenty years or more, believed that he could evade this infamous Act (the 38th of Geo. III, etc., passed to put down Mr. Cobbett's two-penny publications) by issuing weekly what he called his *Political Letters*. Before, however, any of these were published Mr. Hetherington brought out a series of *Penny daily* papers, in a letter form, addressed to different individuals with the view of evading the Act of Parliament, and at the same time to provide cheap political information for the people. After a short time, however, they were published *weekly*, each having the title of a "*Penny Paper for the People*, by the Poor man's Guardian"; and after Mr. Hetherington's first conviction he changed the title to *The Poor Man's Guardian*, published in defiance of law to try the power of right against might.* This publication was first edited by Mr. Mayhew, a brother, I believe, of the author of *London Labour and the Poor*, and subsequently by Mr. James Bronterre O'Brien, a writer and politician of some celebrity. It was not started long, however, before the Stamp Office authorities commenced a fierce warfare against it, first against the publisher, and then against the booksellers, who sold it. This having deterred many from selling it, caused some few of us to volunteer the supplying of it to persons at their own houses within any reasonable distance; and sub-

* The first of the *Penny Papers for the People* was addressed to the People of England, and dated October 1st, 1830. This was followed by papers of a larger form addressed to the Duke of Wellington; to the King; the Archbishop of Canterbury, etc. The first number of the *Poor Man's Guardian* was dated December 25th, 1830, and the last December 20th, 1835.

sequently to organize a general fund for the support of those who were suffering or likely to suffer for striving to disseminate cheap political information amongst the people. This fund was called the "*Victim Fund*"; it was kept up by small weekly subscriptions during the many years the contest lasted, and contributed in no small degree to the success of that contest. The Committee of Management consisted for the most part of Messrs Cleave, Watson, Warden, Russell, Petrie, Mansell, and Devonshire Saul: Julian Hibbert was our treasurer; I was the sub-treasurer, and acted also as secretary during the greater part of the time and Mr. Russell the remaining portion. We met weekly in an upstair room at the Hope Coffee House, King Street, Smithfield, then kept by Mr. John Cleave, and subsequently at his house in Shoe Lane. Finding that the booksellers refused to sell the *Poor Man's Guardian*, and some few other Radical publications subsequently started, we advertised for persons to sell them in the streets and from house to house, and met with many volunteers; some of them from a sincere desire to serve the cause, and others for the mere trifling benefit we held out to them, which was generally a stock of papers to begin with, and a pound in money for every month (or shorter time) they might suffer imprisonment.

When Mr. Hetherington first commenced the publication of the *Guardian* he was established in Kings-gate Street, Holborn, as a printer, with a fair run of business, which for a time was nearly ruined by the resolute course he pursued. For his name as a Radical became so obnoxious to many of his customers that they withdrew their printing from him. One of his most useful apprentices, too, refused to work on such a Radical publication, and was sanctioned in his disobedience by the magistrates, who very readily cancelled his indentures. I remember being present on one occasion when one of Mr. Hetherington's customers, in a large way of business, offered to give him as much printing as he could do on his premises, provided he would give up his Radical publications; but this splendid offer (in a pecuniary

sense) he very nobly refused; although, to my knowledge, his shelves were then filled with thousands of his unsold and returned publications, and all his relations and connections were loudly condemning him for his folly. Mr. Hetherington, however, was not the kind of character to yield under such circumstances. The first time he appeared at Bow Street to answer to the charge of printing and publishing the *Guardian* and *Republican* he honestly told the magistrates that he was determined to resist the efforts of a corrupt government to suppress the voice of the people. His conviction having been confirmed at the next session, he in the interim set off for a tour through the country, and was greatly instrumental in calling up the spirit of the people in opposition to the persecution the Whigs were then waging against the Press. Finding also that many of the old established booksellers were fearful of selling his publications, he and his friends succeeded in inducing many other persons to commence the sale of them.* Many of those were prosecuted and imprisoned; but such proceedings only served to enlist public sympathy in their favour, and to increase their business; many of whom are now the largest booksellers for cheap literature in the kingdom. In this tour the police pursued Mr. Hetherington in all directions, but by the help of friends he succeeded in eluding their vigilance until his return to town. This he was induced to do in hopes of seeing the last of his dying mother; but the police (who were on the watch) captured him at his own door, and inhumanly refused him his request of taking a last farewell of his fond parent, or of even letting his wife know of his being taken off to prison. But the details of injustice and cruelty on the part of the authorities, and of the self-sacrifices and patriotic devotedness on the part of many individuals engaged in this unstamped warfare would take a larger space than I can devote to it. Suffice it to say that the contest lasted upwards of five years; during which time upwards of five hundred persons in different

* Among others Mr. Abel Heywood, since then a Mayor of Manchester.

parts of the kingdom suffered imprisonment for the publication or sale, of the *Poor Man's Guardian*, the *Political Letters*, the *Republican*, the *Police Gazette*, and other Radical publications. Among those persons, Mr. Wm. Carpenter was imprisoned six months in King's Bench Prison; Mr. Henry Hetherington was imprisoned three times: twice in Clerkenwell Prison, for six months each time, and in King's Bench for twelve months. Mr. James Watson was imprisoned twice in Clerkenwell Prison, for six months each time; Mr. John Cleave, for two months in Tothill Fields Prison; and in the City Prison till a fine inflicted on him was paid; together with the seizure of his printing press and printing materials. Mr. Abel Heywood, of Manchester, was imprisoned three months; Mrs. Mann, of Leeds, three months, and several others. None of the victims being allowed trial by jury, but merely condemned in a summary manner by the magistrates; the police being mostly the witnesses, and Mr. Timms, from the Stamp Office, the prosecutor. And what adds to the monstrous injustice of this Government persecution is the fact that, after so many hundred persons had been fined and imprisoned for selling the *Poor Man's Guardian*, it was finally declared before Lord Lyndhurst and a special jury, to be *a strictly legal publication*. This warfare, however, eventually created a public opinion sufficiently powerful to cause the Government to give up the *fourpenny stamp* upon newspapers, and to substitute a *penny stamp* instead.* But this triumphant change was by no means so important as the amount of good that otherwise resulted from the contest. For the unstamped publications may be said *to have originated the cheap literature of the present day*—for few publications existed before they commenced—and the beneficial effects of this cheap literature on the minds and morals of our popula-

* This *penny stamp* necessitated another agitation to be got up, several years after, to get rid of it. In this agitation Mr. Richard Moore, Mr. Cobden, Mr. Villiers, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Bainbridge, and others took the leading part; Mr. Dobson Collett acted as their Secretary. To the same body of gentlemen we also owe the repeal of the Duty on Paper.

tion are beyond all calculation. For many of the cheap literary and scientific publications that were published during that period were started with the avowed object of "diverting the minds of the working classes away from politics," and of giving them "more useful knowledge." In fact a new class of literature sprang up for the first time in England avowedly for the millions, and has gone on increasing and extending its beneficial influence from that period to the present. To this cheap literature, and the subsequent cheap newspapers that resulted from our warfare, may be also traced the great extension of the coffee-rooms and reading-rooms of our large towns, and the mental and moral improvement resulting from their establishment. And although the Radical publications first started were, in many instances, tainted with violence and bitterness, yet some allowance must be made for this, when we consider the rabid persecution waged against those who first strove to unshackle the press, and to bring political knowledge within the reach of the industrious classes. The Stamp Office authorities were rampant in their enmity against the publishers of all cheap political publications. It must not be supposed, however, that the zeal of those gentlemen arose from any patriotic desire to save or add to the revenue, as the following fact tends to prove. For it happened at that time that great complaints were made that stamps of various kinds were missing from the stamping department. To guard against such delinquents a gentleman, of the name of Riley, invented a very ingenious stamping machine, which not only stamped rapidly, but *registered the stamps made;* so that the superintendent had only to set and lock up the machine before the stamping began, and to require from each workman, after the day's work was over, the number of stamps registered. This ingenious invention was highly approved of by a number of scientific men, Dr. Birkbeck and others. Lord Althorp, I think, was Prime Minister at that time, and he was so pleased with the invention that he recommended it to the notice of the Commissioners of Stamps. Mr. Riley took his machine

to these gentlemen and explained all about it. They seemed not to relish it, however, for they told him that *should they need such a machine they would communicate with him.* In fact they did not seem to want a machine that would guard the revenue too effectually. Mr. Riley, after waiting and sickening over hope deferred, eventually took himself and his machine to America, where similar official conduct has driven a great number of ingenious inventors. The police too, at this period, were encouraged to hound out the vendors of the unstamped by the reward of a sovereign for every person they could succeed in convicting.* Many persons were also induced, by the offer of places in the police, to volunteer the sale of those publications, so as to be the better able to trace out and betray the poor fellows who were endeavouring to earn their bread by selling them. As for poor Hetherington, he was hunted from place to place by the police like a wild beast, and was obliged to have resource to all kinds of manœuvres in order to see or correspond with his family. I paid him a secret visit on one occasion at the village of Pinner, some little distance from London, where he lived in a retired cottage for upwards of a year under the assumed name of Mr. Williams; the police in the meantime hunting for him in different parts of the kingdom. And here, too, I think it but justice to the memory of John Cleave to declare that, independent of his fines and imprisonment, he made great sacrifices, both in his business and otherwise, during the many years of this contest. For long before he commenced the publishing of his *Police Gazette*—which was very successful for a time—he was indefatigable in going about in all directions advocating the cause of an unshackled Press, and in promoting the sale of the unstamped. Owing also to our Victim Committee meeting at his coffee house, and

* "A person of the name of Thomas Colley, employed by the Solicitor of the Stamp Office, admitted that he had been the means of convicting *seventy persons* for selling unstamped publications; and that he had received a *pound for each* at the Stamp Office."—*Morning Chronicle.*

the victims coming there to be paid (many of them poor, ragged and dirty), the best portion of his customers were led to desert him; and few were the Radicals who sought to supply their place. John Cleave (though, like most of us, not without his faults) was also warm-hearted and benevolent; and that without much means at his disposal. I have known him, and his kind-hearted wife, to preserve from perishing many of the poor starving boys that were often to be found about the pens of Smithfield; by taking them into his kitchen when cold, hungry, and filthy; by feeding and cleansing them; while he has gone round among his friends to beg some old clothes to cover them. And these poor boys he has generously fed, and otherwise taken care of, till he had finally got them berths at sea, or otherwise provided for them the means of earning their living.

About the period of Mr. Hetherington's first conviction in 1831, I had my little stock of household furniture taken away from me by the Government because I refused to serve in the Militia, or to pay a sum of money as a substitute. At the drawing for the Militia, previous to this legalized robbery of myself, I was forcibly struck with the great injustice of these constantly recurring *drawings for the Militia*, by which a great number of poor men were periodically fleeced of their money, or frightened away from one town to another; and that too in a time of profound peace. An acquaintance of mine, newly married, a Mr. Hilson, who had just commenced business for himself, had the misfortune to be drawn for the Militia. Foreseeing that his business would be ruined if he personally served, he sought about, and engaged a young man in the neighbourhood to become his *substitute*, and with him went to the authorities. His substitute was a fine healthy fellow, better fitted in every respect for a soldier than my short fat friend, but the personages before whom he appeared laughed and scoffed at him for the trouble he had taken. They insolently told him that they wanted not his substitute but *his money*, and then they could choose for themselves. Now, although I had previously seen many of my

shopmates placed in a similar manner, I had never been so forcibly struck with the injustice of the system as I was in this instance ; probably because my Radical convictions had not become sufficiently matured. When, therefore, I heard of the next schedules for the Militia being distributed (in January, 1831), I sent a note to *Carpenter's Political Letters* suggesting that the filling up of the Militia papers afforded a good opportunity for the people to record their protest against the system ; at the same time pointing out a mode in which they might fill up their papers. A number of persons filled up their schedules according to the plan suggested. It was called at the time "the no-vote no-musket plan." However, whether fairly or unfairly, I was drawn ; and summoned at the Coliseum Coffee House, New Road, before the Deputy Lieutenant of the County and other authorities to show what grounds of exemption I had to make against serving in the Militia. I told him that I objected "on the grounds of not being represented in Parliament, and of not having any voice or vote in the election of those persons who made those laws that compelled me to take up arms to protect the rights and property of others, while my *own rights*, and the only property I had, *my labour*, were not protected." Those grounds of exemption, as might be supposed, did not suit the authorities, one of whom, a magistrate of the name of Chambers, was very much incensed against me. In a short time, after my refusal to serve, a party of constables accompanied by a broker of the name of Bradshaw, were sent to seize my goods. Their warrant authorized them to seize to the extent of fifteen pounds, but they took goods away that cost me upwards of thirty, although most of them were made by myself. I need scarcely say that we highly valued them on that account ; but my dear wife proved herself a heroine on that occasion, and suffered them to be carried off without a murmur. She had been offered the means of saving them a day or two previously, but she very nobly resisted the temptation. I was at that time building a large wooden house for an acquaintance of mine ;

and he being very anxious for my completion of it (for we knew not whether they would seize my goods or send me to prison) offered her money to go privately to the authorities and pay for a substitute, without letting me know anything about it; but, as I have said, she very properly refused. So much so was the public feeling excited against this robbery in support of the Militia laws, that several brokers refused to sell the goods after they were seized, and the authorities, after keeping them some time, got them sold at last at Foster's Sale Rooms as *goods seized for taxes*, without giving me any previous notice of the sale, or rendering me any account of what they sold for. I drew up a petition to the House of Commons on the subject, which was presented by Mr. Hunt, and very ably supported by Mr. Hume. Suffice it to say the public excitement on the subject, the belief that many would follow my example in future, and the able manner in which the balloting system was exposed in the House, had a very beneficial effect, as no *drawing* for the Militia has taken place from that time to the present.

CHAPTER IV

In 1831 I joined a new Association, composed chiefly of working men, entitled "The National Union of the Working Classes and Others," its chief objects being "the Protection of Working Men; the Free Disposal of the Produce of Labour; an Effectual Reform of the Commons' House of Parliament; the Repeal of all Bad Laws; the Enactment of a Wise and Comprehensive Code of Laws; and to collect and organize a peaceful expression of public opinion." This Association was organized somewhat on the plan of the Methodist Connexion. *Class-leaders* were appointed at public meetings of the members in the proportion of one for about every thirty or forty members; the Class-leaders mostly meeting with their classes weekly at their own houses. At those meetings political subjects were discussed, and articles from the newspapers and portions of standard political works read and commented on. Branches of the Union were established in various parts of the Metropolis. Public meetings were held weekly in various districts, and speakers appointed to attend them. A great number of similar associations were also organized in different parts of the country. Those associations were greatly efficient in aiding our agitation in favour of a Cheap and Unrestricted Press; in extending public opinion in favour of the Suffrage of the Millions; and in calling forth the condemnation of the people against various unjust and tyrannical acts of the authorities of the day; and could the violence and folly of the hot-brained few have been restrained a far larger amount of good might have been effected. But, as in almost all associations that I have ever been connected with, our best efforts were more frequently directed to the prevention of evil by persons of this description, than in devising every means, and in

seeking every opportunity for the carrying out of our objects. In this Union we had no trifling number of such characters; and night after night was frequently devoted to prevent them, if possible, from running their own unreflecting heads into danger, and others along with them. Among the first projects of these men that we had to contend against was the calling together "*a Secret Convention*" of delegates from the working-class Unions of the kingdom on the subject of reform. Now Cleave, Watson, Hetherington, and myself, as well as a number of others who acted with us, were always opposed to *secret* proceedings. We were for always showing an open and determined front to the enemy, knowing that boldness and honesty in a good cause mostly carry with them public sympathy and support; while the attempts to shun danger by secret plotting, and sneaking contrivances, disgust the public, call forth the suspicion of friends, and place weapons in the hands of the enemy to seal your fate and secure his triumph. By appealing therefore to the warm-hearted and right-minded portion of our members, we generally managed to frustrate those secret schemes, and in this instance prevented our Association from joining, though not without a large share of abuse from those who were secretly corresponding with others in the country respecting it. But to show the kind of persons we refrained from joining in this *secret convention* I may mention that Mr. Hetherington being in the country about twelve months after this affair, learnt the following particulars regarding them. That, owing to the unwillingness of many associations to take part in it, but few delegates assembled at the place and time agreed on. Those few, however, having been tolerably well supplied with money, resolved on taking a trip over to Ireland, provided with a lass a-piece. There they stopped till the Whig Reform Bill was published, when they cooked up out of it a report or bill on the subject of reform, which they presented to their constituents as the result of their labours at the "secret convention."

Soon after I became a member of this union I was deputed, with another person, to address a public meeting

at Spitalfields. At the conclusion of the meeting a person got up and asked me my advice under the following circumstances. He said that a friend of his (an honest sober man) had been out of work for a long time, and being exhausted from the want of food, had a few days ago dropped down in a fainting fit; in which state he was taken to the workhouse, and his wife and family compelled to follow him. That the workhouse being over-crammed (fifteen hundred persons being in it) eight and ten persons were often placed, head to feet, in one bed; and, from the putrid and noxious atmosphere, they were dying off like rotten sheep. That his poor friend had been separated from his wife, and the children from their mother; and that two of the children were then dying from the fever they had caught there. That his friend had been placed in a bed with a fever patient, from which bed a person had but just been taken out dead of the fever, without even the bed-linen being changed. The result was that his poor friend was in a state bordering on madness. He also added that at that very time three lying-in women, with their infants, might be seen in one bed. This appeared to me such a horrible story that I deemed it necessary to write it down in the presence of the person, and of many friends who knew him, and got him to append his signature to it; my object being to give it publicity through the Press. It so happened, however, that there was one of the police present dressed in plain clothes, whose report to his inspector caused that gentleman to inform the master of the workhouse of our proceedings, telling him that if any publicity was made by us, a mere denial of the truth of it from him would be sufficient against a few ignorant Radicals. The next morning, however, the master of the workhouse deemed it necessary to send for the person who had given me the information, and by threats and cajoling induced him to come to us with a note (which he had prepared) modifying some and denying other portions of the statement he had made the previous evening. But it so happened that in his flurry he gave him the note which the inspector had sent to him

instead of the one he had prepared; and thus were we made acquainted with the whole affair. At that period Mr. Wakley (the proprietor of the *Lancet*) was the editor of the Ballot newspaper, and generally took a warm interest in all matters of reform. On making him acquainted with the above story, he requested Mr. Cleave and myself to go with him to investigate to some extent the state of things then existing in Spitalfields. We accordingly went, and we found not only that the horrible state of the workhouse was true as described, but that the state of vast numbers out of it was even worse, for hunger and nakedness in many cases were added to the disease and wretchedness that prevailed. In whole streets that we visited we found nothing worthy of the name of bed, bedding, or furniture; a little straw, a few shavings, a few rags in a corner formed their beds—a broken chair, stool, or old butter-barrel their seats—and a saucepan or cup or two, their only cooking and drinking utensils. Their unpaved yards, and filthy courts, and the want of drainage and cleansing, rendered their houses hotbeds of disease; so that fever combined with hunger was committing great ravages among them. In the first house we visited we met a little girl on the stairs screaming for help, saying that her father was killing himself. We hurried up and found that the poor fellow was trying to destroy himself by running a fork into his throat, and we were fortunately in time to prevent anything serious from being effected. He seemed to have been reduced to a miserable state of despondency from the want of food; and we, finding that his state of health required medical assistance, sent for the parish doctor. When he came he was disposed to be rather insolent towards "the Radicals" until he discovered that one of them was Mr. Wakley, the editor of the *Lancet*, and the exposer of much professional incapacity, when he became exceedingly civil, and attended to the poor patient's wants very promptly. I may add that our visit to Spitalfields and the stir we made there were the means of great alterations being made in the workhouse; more room being provided, and the poor inmates better attended to.

The members of our association, having on various occasions maintained the right of the toiling millions to some share in the Government of the country they were enriching by their labours, called forth, both from the Whig and Tory press, the bitterest feelings of hostility against them. They were denounced as "destructives, revolutionists, pickpockets, and incendiaries; meditating an attack upon every possessor of property, and the uprooting of all law and order." Gibbon Wakefield and his brother also contributed in no small degree to incense the public against them by the publication of a pamphlet entitled "Householders in danger from the Populace;" in which the Rotunda Radicals and the London thieves were classed together as especial objects of dread to all householders. I cannot help thinking, however, but that my refusal to join Mr. Wakefield and Mr. Gougher in their New Zealand scheme of emigration, and my public opposition to it at Exeter Hall, as a plan calculated to place the labourers of our colonies at the mercy of a few capitalists, were the chief inducements that led to the publication of this very exciting pamphlet. Mr. Wakefield, knowing how anxious many of the co-operators were at that time for establishing communities, was very pressing on me to join him, as, from my office of secretary, I was in correspondence with a great number of them in different parts of the country. We were not, however, deterred by threats or abuse from the advocacy of what we believed to be right and just; and when the Whig project of the Reform Bill was put forth we were among the first out of doors who proclaimed its shortcomings. Among other means for making known our opinions on this subject, as well as for ascertaining the opinions of others, we put forth the following declaration of our principles; it was drawn up by Mr. Watson and myself.

Declaration of the National Union of the Working Classes

"Labour is the Source of Wealth."

"That Commonwealth is best ordered when the citizens are neither too rich nor too poor"—Thales.

"At this moment of great public excitement, it is alike the interest of as well as the duty of every working man to declare publicly his political sentiments, in order that the country and Government may be generally acquainted with the wants and grievances of this particular class—in accordance with which we, the working classes of London, declare :—

"1.—All property (honestly acquired) to be sacred and inviolable.

"2.—That all men are born equally free, and have certain natural and inalienable rights.

"3.—That all governments ought to be founded on those rights ; and all laws instituted for the *common benefit in* the protection and security of *all the people* : and not for the particular emolument or advantage of any single man, family, or set of men.

"4.—That all hereditary distinctions of birth are unnatural, and opposed to the equal rights of man ; and therefore ought to be abolished.

"5.—That every man of the age of twenty-one years, of sound mind, and not tainted by crime, has a right, either by himself or his representative, to a free voice in determining the nature of the laws, the necessity for public contributions, the appropriation of them, their amount, mode of assessment, and duration.

"6.—That in order to secure the unbiassed choice of proper persons for representatives, the mode of voting should be *by ballot*, that intellectual fitness and moral worth, *and not property*, should be the qualification for representatives, and that the duration of Parliament should be but for *one year*.

"7.—We declare these principles to be essential to our protection as working men—and the only sure guarantees for the securing to us the proceeds of our labour—and that we will never be satisfied with the enactment of any law or laws which do not recognize the rights we have enumerated in this *declaration*.

"In order to ascertain the opinion of the working classes throughout the kingdom, as well as of all those who think with them, we hereby call a Public Meeting of the useful Classes of London to be held on the space in front of White Conduit House, on Monday, November 7th, 1831, at one o'clock precisely, for the purpose of solemnly ratifying this declaration. And we therefore particularly press upon our fellow labourers, in all parts of the country, to re-echo these principles *on the same day* in public meetings throughout the country."

Mr. Thomas Wakley, afterwards M.P. for Finsbury, having agreed to take the chair on that occasion, the declaration was printed and largely distributed. I may add that the following resolution was agreed to at the same time as our declaration:—"That as our object is just, we wish our proceedings to be peaceably conducted, and therefore, earnestly impress on every working man to conduct himself with order and propriety, and to consider himself a special constable for that day, for the purpose of enforcing peace from others if necessary." This resolution was called forth by the ferocious conduct the new police had exhibited on various occasions, a few days previously they having made an unprovoked attack upon Mr. Savage, and a number of Radicals from Marylebone, on their way to the Home Office to present a petition to the King.

In the interim, previous to our public meeting, an announcement was made for the formation of the "National Political Union." The committee of our association having been informed that this new union was not disposed to go for any measure of reform beyond the Whig Reform Bill, and that its chief object was to support the

Whigs in the carrying of that measure at all risks, deemed it necessary to attend the public meeting called, with the view of proposing an amendment in favour of *universal suffrage*. But Mr. Cleave and myself had no sooner entered into the Crown and Anchor (the intended place of meeting) than we were requested to go into the Committee-room, as they wanted some conversation with us. When we presented ourselves, the chairman, Mr. Place, stated that they had been informed of our intention to oppose them, and wished to know what the nature of our opposition would be. We said that that would depend on the resolutions they submitted to the meeting. These being shown to us, I made some remarks on their exclusive character, and informed them that as they were about to appeal for the support of the working classes, I should deem it my duty to move an amendment for extending the suffrage to persons of that class. Mr. Roebuck and some others who were present, were very anxious for the committee to make that a part of their resolutions, but in this desire they were in the minority. I may now add that well would it be for the middle and working classes of the present day if this just and reasonable proposition of Mr. Roebuck had been adopted—much of the strife, persecution, and sacrifice, that both have since suffered, might have been avoided, and our country be progressing in peace, prosperity, and happiness, instead of being plunged into ruinous expenses, and disgraceful sucrifices, by aristocratical insolence, ignorance, and official inaptitude.

The room at the tavern not being large enough for the numbers that attended, they adjourned the meeting to Lincoln's Inn Fields. Sir Francis Burdett was the chairman appointed. The Committee and their friends, knowing of our intention to propose an amendment, so arranged themselves that they drowned by their noise and clamour every effort that Mr. Cleave and myself made in proposing our amendment to the meeting. Mr. Wakley, however, was a little more successful, for, after various efforts to make the chairman put his amendment, it was carried

that one half of the council should be working men, which was said to be the cause of Sir Francis retiring from the union in disgust; so much for his patriotism at that time.

Our proceedings in this affair, joined to the former prejudices against us, caused a *Proclamation* to be issued against our intended meeting. Special constables were sworn in—the soldiery were marched in great numbers into Islington—and orders were issued to the police to seize on every member of our committee that made his appearance at the meeting. The Press, also, were not behind in their denunciations of us. They declared that we wanted to re-enact the Bristol riots, and that we had great numbers of pikes and arms of various kinds preparing in Whitechapel and Spitalfields. These false statements caused us to appoint a deputation to wait upon Lord Melbourne, to explain to him our conduct and intention as regarded the meeting. On being introduced to his lordship, he asked whether the parties were present who signed the printed declaration, which the Government considered highly seditious if not treasonable? Mr. Watson, and Osborn the secretary, replied that we were the parties. We were then requested to call again at three o'clock, it being then about twelve. When introduced the second time we found the minister accompanied with his brother, Mr. Lamb, and the chairs so arranged as if to form a barrier between them and us. A posse of the new police were also posted in the next room; for happening to slightly move the chair before me in speaking, the side door suddenly pushed open, enabling us to see a number of them arrayed truncheons in hand. I suppose they thought that prime ministers could not be safely trusted with men who had declared that all hereditary distinctions ought to be abolished. We informed his lordship that we wished to undeceive him as regarded our intentions in calling the public meeting which the Press had so wilfully misrepresented; that so far from entertaining any idea of disturbing the public peace we were readily disposed to aid the authorities in preserving it, having offered to be sworn in as special constables. That we had

been charged with a desire to imitate the Bristol proceedings, while the fact was that our declaration was posted on the walls of London before that unfortunate affair was known or even thought of. That as regards the principles set forth in that document (which his lordship said was seditious and treasonable) we had read them in the works of many eminent men, and were not aware that the simple fact of putting them in the form of a declaration would subject us to so serious a charge. That they were, however, our opinions, and we saw no impropriety in ascertaining how far our fellow workmen agreed with us. Mr. Watson then asked his lordship some questions as regards the intention of the Government, when he read to us the circular issued to the Magistrates, to the effect of the illegality of the meeting, and warning people against it. I replied to him that I thought it a great injustice that the middle classes should be allowed to have their unions and open-air meetings, while the working classes should be prevented from holding their meetings. The minister, however, persisted that our meeting was highly illegal, and that any person attending it would be in the act of committing high treason. Mr. Cleave wished to address him further, but his lordship, it would seem, not wishing to hear more, bade us good morning. At our committee meeting in the evening a very warm debate took place regarding the propriety of holding or postponing our public meeting. One portion of the committee were for holding it at all risks, but the majority, believing that the Government were determined by all the force at their disposal to prevent the meeting from taking place, thought it prejudicial to the cause to provoke the sacrifice that would necessarily ensue. Reason and prudence, however, at last prevailed, and an unanimous vote was ultimately agreed to for the postponement of the meeting. I may here state that while the working classes were thus prevented from giving expression to their opinions, the middle classes were devising all kinds of schemes, treasonable and seditious, for the carrying of the Reform Bill—the Whig Press was teeming with daily attacks against our aristo-

cracy for doing all they could to frustrate the measure, and at the same time threatening them with a force of *a hundred and fifty thousand armed men* who were ready to come up from the country to support the Whigs in carrying it.

Shortly after this affair Mr. Cleave and myself had again to trouble Lord Melbourne on behalf of a number of working men at Manchester, who had been committed for trial at the Lancaster Assizes on a charge of *unlawfully assembling on a Sunday evening*. His lordship having accepted and replied to an address to the King, emanating from a meeting of the same parties on the previous Sunday, praying that the lives of the Bristol and Nottingham rioters might be spared, it was deemed desirable that he should be summoned on the trial. He being a Cabinet Minister, this could only be done through the Crown Office, and our Union being applied to on the subject by the Radicals of Manchester, Mr. Cleave and myself were deputed to endeavour to subpœna his lordship. We accordingly made the application for the summons at the Crown Office, but it was not until a messenger had been sent off to the Home Office to apprise Lord Melbourne of our intention that we obtained it. When, therefore, we got there, Mr. Phillips, the under-secretary, refused us admission to his lordship. This afforded us an opportunity of reminding him of the bad example this was setting to the people, in not readily complying with the requirements of law and justice ; and of the great want of humanity on the part of his lordship in not readily coming forward to tender his evidence when the lives and liberty of a number of poor working men were thus threatened. The result of this altercation with the under-secretary was, that he allowed us to leave the summons, promising to deliver it to the minister. When, however, the trial came on, Lord Melbourne sent a letter to the judge, admitting his having received and replied to the address the parties had sent, but requesting to be excused from personally attending on account of his official duties. Four of the poor Radicals were, however, found guilty, and sentenced

to twelve months' imprisonment to Lancaster gaol *for assembling on a Sunday evening.*

In March, 1832, the Government, at the instigation of the would-be saintly Percival, ordained a general fast to be observed throughout the kingdom, for beseeching God to remove the cholera from among us. Now, most of the members of our union had seen enough in Spitalfields and other districts at that period to convince us that the ravages made by that dreadful disease were chiefly to be attributed to the want and wretchedness that prevailed there ; and therefore thought that Parliament would have shown more Christian feeling if they had called upon Percival and his bigoted coadjutors to give up a portion of their annual fleecings of the public to enable a portion of those poor wretches to *feast*, instead of hypocritically acceding to a *fast*. We believed also that the causes that matured and extended that disease were greatly within the power of Government to remove ; and, therefore, saw in this proposed fast an attempt on the part of rulers to father their own iniquitous neglect upon the Almighty.* We saw also that the bigots who originated and promoted the solemn mockery, were first and foremost among those whose injustice, oppression, and gross neglect had occasioned so much ignorance, poverty, and misery in the country, and consequently their concomitants of filth and disease. We resolved, therefore, from the first, that we would not comply with this piece of hypocrisy, but that we would enter into a subscription to provide the members of our union with *a good dinner on that day ;* those who could afford it to provide for those who could not. This we conceived would be a better religious observance of the day than if we had selfishly feasted (as we knew many would) on salt fish with egg sauce, and other delicacies.

* Some idea may be formed of the causes that contributed to the cholera and other diseases of that period, when I state on the authority of the medical officers of the Holborn Union, in their report, that the London cesspools, if united, would form a channel ten miles long, fifty feet wide, and six feet deep ; and that they supplied to the River Thames daily 7000 loads of poisonous filth that might have been converted into the most valuable manure.

As we were prevented by law from working on that day, we first thought of holding public meetings in different parts of London ; but having consulted a barrister on the subject—now a celebrated magistrate—and finding that we should subject ourselves to the mercies of the ecclesiastical court, we resolved on taking a peaceable and orderly walk before dinner. We understood from our legal adviser that there was no law to prevent us from forming a peaceable procession through the streets at any time, provided we had no flags, nor banners, nor weapons of defence. On the morning of the fast day we accordingly assembled in Finsbury Square ; the *Morning Chronicle* estimating the numbers of our union to be upwards of twenty thousand, and at least a hundred thousand persons in connection with the object of the procession. We there formed ourselves in order four abreast, Hetherington, Watson and myself being at the head of the procession ; our object being merely to take a walk through the Strand, Piccadilly and Hyde Park, and to return to our respective classes to dine, by way of Oxford Street and Holborn. But this route we were not allowed to take, for after we had walked peacefully and uninterruptedly through the City our progress through the Strand was obstructed by the new police drawn across Temple Bar armed with staves and drawn cutlasses, said by the newspaper to be " admirably adapted for fighting in a crowd." We, however, having no intention to fight (not having a walking-stick among us) turned up Chancery Lane into Holborn. Here again was another body of the police drawn across to prevent us from going up Holborn, and as we wheeled in front of them to go down towards Gray's Inn Lane we fully expected to feel the weight of their truncheons. Thus we went on, opposed at different points in our progress, towards Hetherington's ; Castle Street ; and other places of meeting ; till in Tottenham Court Road the police, coming down Howland Street, threw themselves across our procession. Benbow and a few others here lost all patience, and forced their way through the ranks of the police, which caused them to exercise their staves rather freely. Fearing further dis-

turbance if we went on with the procession we drew up in the North Crescent, and there we, having addressed a few words to the people on the object of the procession, they, by our advice, broke up, and retired to their respective classes to dine. It will be seen by this slight sketch that the police did all they could on that day to provoke a disturbance ; they came out fully prepared, with staves and cutlasses, to have their revenge on us, and they could not forbear from openly expressing their disappointment. In the course of a few days Benbow was apprehended for taking part in this procession, and shortly after Mr. Watson and myself. My arrest took place outside the office door in Marlborough Street, having gone there to hear the case of some young men who had been taken up for practising the broad sword exercise *with wooden swords*. Bail for me was at once tendered, but the magistrate required time, he said, to make enquiries. I was accordingly locked up in a dark cell, about nine feet square, the only air admitted into it being through a small grating over the door, and in one corner of it was a pailful of filth left by the last occupants, the smell of which was almost overpowering. There was a bench fixed against the wall on which to sit down, but the walls were literally covered with water, and the place so damp and cold, even at that season of the year, that I was obliged to keep walking round and round, like a horse in an apple-mill, to keep anything like life within me. As it was, I caught a severe cold and hoarseness, from which I did not recover for some weeks. I had taken no food since my breakfast, and that which was brought me by my friends was refused to be admitted, so that I had none till about eight o'clock at night, when my friend Julian Hibbert put me a few crumbs of biscuit through the wire grating over the door. It being near the sessions we succeeded in traversing our case till the next, which took place at Clerkenwell Sessions House on the 16th of May, 1832. The indictment charged us with being "disaffected and ill-disposed persons, who with force and arms had made a great riot, tumult, and disturbance on the day stated, and with having

for the space of five hours caused great terror and alarm to all the liege subjects of the King." And to show the animus of the authorities towards us, they mixed up in our indictment the case of two lads (strangers to us) said to have been detected committing some disturbance in Finsbury Square on the evening of the fast-day, while we were meeting in our classes, which the Chairman himself admitted had no reference to our case. The evidence against us was given for the most part by the police who provoked the disturbance. The three of us defended ourselves as we best could, though not without frequent interruptions from the Chairman (a Mr. Rotch, or Roach), ours being his first case after his election as chairman of the sessions. A number of witnesses voluntarily came forward to depose to our peaceful and orderly conduct during the day, among others Mr. Richard Taylor, one of the Common Council of the City of London. One of the witnesses testified to his having heard one of the directors of the police say to his men, in Tottenham Court Road, "Out with your truncheons, and fall on them and show them no quarter." Suffice to say we found an honest jury and were triumphantly acquitted, a verdict which was received with great cheering and rejoicing by a very crowded assembly both within and without the court.

This trial, however, was the cause of Mr. Watson and myself withdrawing our names from the committee of the Union, although we did not resign our membership. This was owing to Benbow's underhanded conduct in matters relating to the trial, and by him and the lawyer he employed uniting together to impose a very unjust bill upon the funds of the Union, in which acts we thought him countenanced by his re-election on the committee.

In May in the following year the unfortunate Calthorpe Street affair took place. This had its origin in a public meeting called by the Union of the Working Classes on the Calthorpe Estate, Cold Bath Fields, for taking preparatory steps respecting the calling of a National Convention. The proceedings, however, had no sooner commenced than the police made a furious onslaught upon the assembled

multitude, knocking down, indiscriminately, men, women, and children, great numbers of them being very dangerously wounded. In the affray a policeman, of the name of Robert Cully, lost his life, he being stabbed by a person whom he had struck with his truncheon. On the inquest held on him, the following verdict was returned by the jury: "We find a verdict of Justifiable Homicide on these grounds—That no Riot Act was read, nor any proclamation advising the people to disperse; that the Government did not take proper precautions to prevent the meeting from assembling; and that the conduct of the police was ferocious, brutal, and unprovoked by the people; and we, moreover, express our anxious hope that the Government will in future take better precautions to prevent the recurrence of such disgraceful transactions in the metropolis." A person of the name of George Fursey was subsequently tried at the Old Bailey, charged with the stabbing of a policeman of the name of Brook at this meeting, with intent of doing him some grievous bodily harm. He was also acquitted by the jury, amid great applause from the people assembled. Not approving of this meeting, I took no part in it, although I was nearly entrapped into it by the representations and the request of a police spy, then thought by me to be one of our warmest friends. This person for some time previously had been known to Mr. Hetherington and other Radical friends from his frequent attendance at our meetings; his regular subscriptions to the Victim Fund; his constant visits to Hetherington's shop for the purchase of periodicals; and for the great zeal and interest he seemed to take in all our proceedings. He dressed well, professed himself a Republican in politics, and represented himself to belong to an aristocratic family, who had discarded him for the part he had taken in the war of South American Independence. The day previous to the Calthorpe Street meeting, I met with him at a public meeting at the Crown and Anchor. He requested me to go with him to have something to drink, as he particularly wished to have some conversation with me regarding our Working Class Union.

I said that I would prefer going to a coffee-house to any other place, on which he took me into the coffee-room of a tavern at the bottom of Wych Street, and saying something at the bar in passing, we had two glasses of brandy and water set before us. There was only one man in the coffee room at the time, and he sat in the box behind me so that he could hear all that was said. My supposed friend began talking of the Victim Fund, and of our chances of success with "the unstamped," and finally of the intended meeting. I frankly told him that I thought it a foolish affair, as we could do more in our respective districts in favour of our objects than we could in any such convention; and that entertaining that opinion (in conjunction with many other members of the Union) I had determined to take no part in the meeting. At this he expressed his very great regret, and said he believed it to be one of the best efforts we had yet made. But, he added, if you and others—whom he named—stand aloof from it, I fear it will be a very sorry affair. He then urged me very warmly to attend the meeting, even if I did not take part in it, and to get as many of my friends as possible to be there to give it some kind of countenance, and prevent it turning out the failure which he otherwise anticipated. He at the same time pressed me very heartily with the drink, but one glass sufficed; whilst he, having taken three or four, began to talk very lively, and to be less guarded. In replying to a question which he put to me regarding the organization of the Union, I fancied I saw him making signs to the person in the box behind me, and this for the first time excited my suspicion respecting him; I therefore tried to change the subject of conversation, and became exceedingly cautious regarding what I said for the remainder of the evening. The next morning, however, he called at my house, and learning from my wife that I had gone to my work, he set off to find me without even asking for the address. This he seems to have previously obtained in some way, for without any enquiry he came upstairs at once in the shop where I was at work. He began making some kind of

apology for having, as he thought, offended me on the previous evening, he being, he said, a little tipsy at the time. He said that his principal object in calling on me was to give me half-a-sovereign for the Victim Fund, which he had forgotten to do on the previous evening. He seemed so hearty and so earnest, and talked about the intended meeting in such a manner as to entirely remove from my mind the slight suspicion I entertained of him from the previous evening; so that I promised him to be at the meeting. On leaving, he expressed a wish that I would be there punctually by two o'clock, as he should be there to meet me. It so happened, however, that I was making a set of dining tables, and had very nearly completed them, when my employer came in to inform me that the gentleman they were for had just called at his house to request that the tables should be sent home that afternoon. He begged, therefore, that I would stop to finish them before I set off to the meeting, which I readily consented to do. My employer, being himself a Radical and an earnest good man, would have gone with me to the meeting at the time specified, but for this pressing request about the tables. The finishing of them therefore caused us to be about half an hour behind the time that the meeting was called for. Before, however, we were able to set off, the news came to us of this brutal attack of the police; otherwise, in all probability we should have fared badly. For we afterwards learnt that this very plausible personage, who had tried so hard to get me to attend the meeting, figured very actively on the side of the police on that day. I need scarcely say that he never came near me again; I saw him afterwards on two occasions, but he strived to skulk away from me. In fact, it appeared very clearly that he was for years a spy upon our actions, and when needed, a decoy to induce victims to enter his masters' trap. I may here notice, that about this period *the spy system* was as rife as in the days of Sidmouth and Castlereagh; proofs of which were subsequently brought home to the Melbourne Ministry by the indefatigable William Cobbett, aided by some members of our Union.

In a committee which he obtained, while he was the member for Oldham, ample proofs were afforded to prove that Popay and other police spies were employed by the Government, and paid out of the secret service money. This Popay had joined different branches of our Union, and worked himself into their confidence by his activity and professions; introducing at the same time his wife into their different families, and making her a confederate in his villainy. He was known to have suggested, and in many cases to have drawn up resolutions of the most violent character; and to have urged on individuals the procuring of arms of different kinds. He attended our class-meetings and public meetings constantly for the purpose of reporting them to Government. The following extract from Mr. Cobbett's report of the evidence that had been laid before the Select Committee, will convey some idea of the rascal. "Your Committee request the House first to cast their eyes over the ten months' deeds of this most indefatigable and unrelenting spy; to survey the circle of his exploits from the Borough Town Hall to Blackheath, and from Copenhagen House to Finsbury Square. To behold him dancing with the wife of the man whom he had denounced in his reports, and standing on a tombstone writing down, and then reporting the words uttered over the grave of a departed reformer.* To trace him going from meeting to meeting, and from group to group, collecting matter for accusation in the night, and going regularly in the morning bearing the fruits of his perfidy to his immediate employer, to be by him conveyed to the Government. To follow him into the houses of John B. Young, and of Mr. Sturges, and then see him and his wife and children relieved and fed and warmed and cherished; and then look at one of his written reports, and see him describe Young's Union Class as armed to a man; and at another, see him describe Mr. Sturges as the teacher of a doctrine that 'fitted man for the worst of offences,' and see Lord Melbourne writing on the back of this report

* This was the speech of Thelwall over Hardy's grave, in Bunhill Fields' burying ground.

that 'it is not unimportant, and ought not to be lost sight of.' To look at him making the hearts of these honest men and kind petitioners ache, and bringing tears into their eyes by his piteous tales of poverty; to contemplate his profound hypocrisy, his assumed melancholy and distress of mind, his affected inclination to self-destruction and his putting his wife forward as an auxiliary in the work of perfidy. Your Committee request the house to cast their eyes over these ten months of the life of this man and then consider whether it be possible for a government to preserve the affections of a frank and confiding people, unless it, at once, and in the most unequivocal manner, give proof of its resolution to put an end, and for ever, to a system which could have created such a monster in human shape."

The great excitement occasioned by the Trades Unions in 1834 was the cause of our National Union of the Working Classes gradually declining in numbers, and eventually of its dissolution. This vast combination of working men in different parts of the country, unitedly known as "The Consolidated National Trades Union," had its origin, I believe, in 1833. Not that this was the origin of Trades Unions in general, but of this particular one; for Unions of particular trades have existed in this country for hundreds of years, in some form or other. I think the origin of the Consolidated Union may be traced to an attempt on the part of the master manufacturers of Leicester and Derby to break up the particular Trades Unions of these towns; and the resolve on the part of other trades throughout the kingdom to frustrate their efforts. Soon after its formation, a great stimulus to its extension was found in the transportation of six poor Dorchester labourers belonging to a friendly society of agricultural labourers, having for their object the improvement of their miserable wages; their alleged offence being the taking of an oath on their admission as members. One of the most remarkable processions that perhaps ever walked through the streets of London, was got up by the Consolidated Union to present an address to the King (through Lord

Melbourne) in favour of those poor labourers. The address was signed by two hundred and fifty thousand persons; the members and friends of the Trades Unions of the metropolis. About a hundred and twenty thousand persons walked in procession from Copenhagen Fields, where the Cattle Market now stands, to the Home Office, to present the address; myself being one of the number. But when the deputation, who had been appointed, took it into the Home Office, it was refused by Lord Melbourne on account of the great numbers accompanying it. Many of us Radicals joined this Consolidated Union, as most of us were members of trade societies. We had also in view the inducing them, if possible, to declare in favour of Universal Suffrage, but in this we were unsuccessful; their principal object being to obtain a fair standard of wages by combination and strikes. In addition to which they had copied a great number of the forms, ceremonies, signs, and fooleries of freemasonry, and I believe thought more of them, at that time, than of just principles. A number of unsuccessful strikes, however, in different parts of the country subsequently led to the breaking up of this gigantic Union.

Our co-operative store in Greville Street having been broken up in this year, I opened the same premises as a coffee-house, one of the rooms being fitted up as *a conversation-room*, so as to separate the talkers from the readers. I took in what at that time was considered a large supply of newspapers and periodicals, and had moreover a library attached to it of several hundred volumes. The conversation-room was tolerably well attended of an evening, in which debates on various subjects were held, and classes, critical readings, and recitations carried on by the young men who attended. There was also a little society established there for a short time known as the "Social Reformers." The place, however, being in a back street, and I being somewhat notorious as a Radical, operated very much against me; and after struggling with it for about two years at a loss, I was obliged very reluctantly to give it up. I was told by a coffee-house keeper as soon as I

opened it that I should never succeed if I continued to sell my tea and coffee genuine at the prices I adopted, the custom in the trade being to mix them with other ingredients. I persevered, however, in doing what I believed to be just, although I realized the truth of the prediction. But notwithstanding my want of success, I now look back upon those two years of my life with great pleasure and satisfaction, for during this period I gained a considerable amount of information, and was, I believe, the means of causing much useful knowledge to be diffused among the young men who frequented the place.

Among the number of young men that frequented it was a very clever chronometer maker, of the name of Glashan, from whom I derived a great deal of information, for he had read much and was of a scientific turn of mind. I remember going with him on one occasion to the Webb Street School of Anatomy, soon after the dissection of the celebrated Jeremy Bentham, where we saw his head on one of the shelves of the place. I remember that we were both struck with his very large perceptive faculties, but thought his head not so very large considering the vast amount of intellectual labour that he had performed. It was at my coffee-house, too, that I first became acquainted with Mr. Richard Moore, a cabinet carver, and a person of considerable mental attainments. I was connected with him in several associations, and since then he has taken a very active part in getting rid of the penny stamp on newspapers ; and also a leading part in most elections for the Liberal members for Finsbury. It was during my residence in Greville Street, too, that I became acquainted with Mazzini, who about that time opened a school, nearly opposite to us, for the instruction of the poor music boys and image boys.

In this year also (1834), our Victim Fund sustained a great loss by the death of our estimable friend Julian Hibbert, our treasurer. He was a person of extreme liberal views both in politics and religion ; indeed, he used frequently to say that he could wish to practise the good found among all religions, but had no faith in any of their

creeds. He belonged, I believe, to an aristocratic family; had received an excellent education, and was, I understand, a capital Greek scholar. From my intimate knowledge of him I know that he possessed a kind and generous disposition, and that he was ever foremost in helping the down-trodden and oppressed without show or ostentation. Acting as treasurer, he was the chief prop of our Victim Fund for nearly four years, and during that period I was a witness of the invaluable aid he rendered in many ways to the cause of the oppressed. I have also cause for believing that for a number of years before he came among us he was the chief pecuniary supporter of the men whose labours, battles, and sufferings eventually established in this country *the right of free discussion in politics and religion.* And however persons may differ from the religious or political views of Richard Carlisle, Robert Taylor, James Watson, and the number of others who laboured and suffered with them, as far as they helped to establish the right *of all men* to honestly declare and publish their opinions regarding what they believe to be right and true on those important questions, they will merit the thanks of posterity.

CHAPTER V

In 1836 I was appointed, at a public meeting held at the Mechanics' Institute, one of the committee for the drawing up of an Act of Parliament for the regulation of benefit societies—an act that became law in the same year, and by which a person was appointed to certify that the rules of such societies are in accordance with the Act; Tidd Pratt being the first official appointed.

About this period, too, I drew up a petition to Parliament, praying that the landowners may be compelled to fulfil the conditions upon which they hold their lands; namely, by defraying the expenses of the state. The petition set forth the monstrous injustice of the land of the country—which a bountiful Creator bestowed upon all his children—being engrossed and held in possession by comparatively a few persons; and who, by virtue of an almost exclusive power of legislation, have enacted the most oppressive laws to protect what they call their property. That no agreement, however, which gives an *absolute right* in land or in things which are common to all, to any man or body of men, can be binding on those who may subsequently come into existence. The people of a country may delegate power to an individual or a body of men to use or convert certain natural productions to their purposes *conditionally* and for the benefit of all, *but the land itself cannot be given exclusively to any.* That we had found on enquiry that all the lands of this kingdom are in fact held *conditionally* of the king, as the executive of the people; for Mr. Justice Blackstone has declared in his Commentaries, book 2, cap. 7, "that no subject in England has *allodial property*, it being a received and now undeniable principle in the law that *all the lands in England are holden mediately or immediately of the king.*" We have also learnt

that the conditions upon which the lands of this country are held are—that the holders do defray all the expenses of the army and navy, of the household of the king, and other expenses attendant upon the carrying on of the Government and defending the country.

This petition was signed by a great number of persons, and was presented to the House of Lords by Lord King, and to the House of Commons by Mr. Cobbett.

Towards the conclusion of the unstamped warfare public opinion had so far progressed in our favour that we were enabled to get together a large and influential committee for raising subscriptions to pay off the last fines which Government had imposed on Messrs. Cleave and Hetherington. Dr. Birkbeck and Francis Place were the joint treasurers of that committee, and Mr. J. Roberts and myself the secretaries. The money for paying those fines was raised in a comparatively short time, and our affairs very appropriately wound up by a public dinner given to Messrs. Cleave and Hetherington, the twin champions of the unstamped. A short time, however, before this an attempt was made towards the formation of "A Society for Promoting a Cheap and Honest Press," but little was done beyond the publication of an excellent address on the subject, written by Dr. J. R. Black, an American, who had previously taken an active part in the collection of Cleave's and Hetherington's fines. We found, however, that we had collected together a goodly number of active and influential working men, persons who had principally done the work of our late committee; and the question arose among us, whether we could form and maintain a union formed exclusively of this class and of such men. We were the more induced to try the experiment as the working classes had not hitherto evinced that discrimination and independent spirit in the management of their political affairs which we were desirous to see. A lord, a M.P., or an esquire was a leading requisite to secure a full attendance and attention from them on all public occasions, as well as among those who called themselves their betters. They were always looking up *to leader-*

ship of one description or another; were being swayed to and fro in opinion and action by the *idol* of their choice, and were rent and divided when some popular breath had blown that *idol* from its pedestal. In fact the masses, in their political organizations, were taught to look up to "*great men*" (or to men *professing greatness*) rather than to great principles. We wished, therefore, to establish a political school of self-instruction among them, in which they should accustom themselves to examine great *social and political principles*, and by their publicity and free discussion help to form a sound and healthful public opinion throughout the country. We had seen enough of the contentions of leaders and battles of factions to convince us that no sound public opinion, and consequently no just government, could be formed in this country as long as men's attention was constantly directed to the useless warfare of pulling down and setting up one idol of party after another. We felt further convinced that no healthful tone of political morality could be formed among us sufficiently powerful to resist the bribing and treating influences of unprincipled candidates for power, so long as our fellow-workmen continued to croak over their grievances with maudlin brains, and to form and strengthen their appetites for drink amid the fumes of the tap-room. The result of our deliberations on those questions was the formation of "The London Working Men's Association." It was first formed at No. 14, Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, and shortly after we took premises at No. 6, Upper North Place, Gray's Inn Road. The objects of the Association were the following:

"1. To draw into one bond of *unity* the *intelligent* and *influential* portion of the working classes in town and country.

"2. To seek by every legal means to place all classes of society in possession of their equal political and social rights.

"3. To devise every possible means, and to use every exertion, to remove those cruel laws that prevent the free

circulation of thought through the medium of a *cheap and honest press.*

"4. To promote, by all available means, the education of the rising generation, and the extirpation of those systems which tend to future slavery.

"5. To collect every kind of information appertaining to the interests of the working classes in particular and society in general, especially statistics regarding the wages of labour, the habits and condition of the labourer, and all those causes that mainly contribute to the present state of things.

"6. To meet and communicate with each other for the purpose of digesting the information required, and to mature such plans as they believe will conduce in practice to the well-being of the working classes.

"7. To publish their views and sentiments in such form and manner as shall best serve to create a moral, reflecting, yet energetic public opinion; so as eventually to lead to a gradual improvement in the condition of the working classes, without violence or commotion.

"8. To form a library of reference and useful information; to maintain a place where they can associate for mental improvement, and where their brethren from the country can meet with kindred minds actuated by one great motive—that of benefiting politically, socially, and morally, the useful classes. Though the persons forming this Association will be at all times disposed to co-operate with all those who seek to promote the happiness of the multitude, yet being convinced from experience that the division of interests in the various classes, in the present state of things, is too often destructive of that union of sentiment which is essential to the prosecution of any great object, they have resolved to confine their members as far as practicable to the working classes. But as there are great differences of opinion as to where the line should be drawn which separates the working classes from the other portions of society, they leave to the Members themselves to

determine whether the candidate proposed is eligible to become a Member." *

The spirit that actuated the members of this Association when formed, may be judged of from the following extract from their Address to Working Men's Associations :—

"It is a pleasing evidence of the progressive knowledge of those great principles of democracy which we are contending for, to find kindred minds prepared to appreciate, and noble hearts seeking their practical development in the remotest parts of the kingdom.

"But we would respectfully caution our brethren in other societies strictly to adhere to a judicious selection of their members—on this more than on any other of their exertions harmony and success will depend. Let us, friends, seek to make the principles of democracy as respectable in practice as they are just in theory, by excluding the drunken and immoral from our ranks, and in uniting in close compact with the honest, sober, moral, and thinking portion of our brethren.

"Doubtless, by such selections our numbers in many instances will be few compared with the vicious many, but these few will be more efficient for the political and social emancipation of mankind than an indiscriminate union of thousands, where the veteran drunkard contaminates by his example, and the profligate railer at abuses saps by his private conduct the cause he has espoused.

"In forming Working Men's Associations, we seek not a mere exhibition of numbers unless, indeed, they possess

* The persons who took more or less an active part in the London Working Men's Association were Messrs. Henry Hetherington, John Cleave, Richard Moore, James Watson, W. Lovett, Henry Vincent, Robert Hartwell, Henry Mitchell, William Hoare, George Tomey, John Rogers, John Gast, William Savage, Richard Cameron, Charles H. Neesom, Julian Harney, John Lawrence, James Lawrence, George Glashan, Wm. Cumming, John Danson, Arthur Dyson, Thomas Ireland, Thomas White, S. Calderara, Wm. Pearse, Wm. Isaacs, Wm. Dixon, James Jenkinson, Edward Thomas, John Jaffray, John Skelton, Wm. Moore, Daniel Binyon, Thomas Engall, Arthur Milner, Thomas Slater, Henry Lemon, R. Jameson, Thomas Thorne, Cowper Lacey, and others.

the attributes and character of *men!* and little worthy of the name are those who have no aspirations beyond mere sensual enjoyments; who, forgetful of their duties as fathers, husbands, and brothers, muddle their understandings and drown their intellect amid the drunken revelry of the pot-house—whose profligacy makes them the ready tools and victims of corruption or slaves of unprincipled governors, who connive at their folly and smile while they forge for themselves the fetters of liberty by their love of drink.

"We doubt not that the excessive toil and misery to which the sons of labour are subject, in the absence of that knowledge and mental recreation which all just governments should seek to diffuse, are mainly instrumental in generating that intemperance, the debasing influence of which we perceive and deplore. But, friends, though we possess not the political power to begin our reformation at the source of the evil, we cannot doubt the efficacy of our exertions to check by precept and example this politically-debasing, soul-subduing vice.

"Fellow-countrymen, *when we contend for an equality of political rights*, it is not in order to lop off an unjust tax or useless pension, or to get a transfer of wealth, power, or influence, for a party; *but to be able to probe our social evils to their source, and to apply effective remedies to prevent, instead of unjust laws to punish.* We shall meet with obstacles, disappointments, and it may be with persecutions, in our pursuit; but with our united exertions and perseverance, we must and will succeed.

"And if the teachers of temperance and preachers of morality would unite like us, and direct their attention to *the source* of the evil, instead of nibbling at the effects, and seldom speaking of the cause; then, indeed, instead of splendid palaces of intemperance daily erected, as if in mockery of their exertions—built on the ruins of happy home, despairing minds, and sickened hearts—we should soon have a sober, honest, and reflecting people.

"In the pursuit, therefore, of our religious object, it will be necessary to be prudent in our choice of members;

we should also avoid by every possible means, holding our meetings at public-houses ; habits and associations are too often formed at those places which mar the domestic happiness, and destroy the political usefulness of the millions. Let us, then, in the absence of means to hire a better place of meeting—meet at each others' houses. Let us be punctual in our attendance, as best contributing to our union and improvement ; and, as an essential requisite, seek to obtain a select library of books, choosing those at first which will best inform of our political and social rights. Let us blend, as far as our means will enable us, study with recreation, and share in any rational amusement (unassociated with the means of intoxication) calculated to soothe our anxieties and alleviate our toils.

"And, as our object is universal, so (consistent with justice) ought to be our means to compass it ; and we know not of any means more efficient, than to enlist the sympathies and quicken the intellects of our wives and children to a knowledge of their rights and duties ; for, as in the absence of knowledge, they are the most formidable obstacles to a man's patriotic exertions, so when imbued with it will they prove his greatest auxiliaries. Read, therefore, talk, and politically and morally instruct your wives and children ; let them, as far as possible, share in your pleasures, as they must in your cares ; and they will soon learn to appreciate your exertions, and be inspired with your own feelings against the enemies of their country. Thus instructed your wives will spurn instead of promoting you to accept, the base election bribe—your sons will scorn to wear the livery of tyrants—and your daughters be doubly fortified against the thousand ills to which the children of poverty are exposed.

"Who can foretell the great political and social advantages that must accrue from the wide extension of societies of this description acting up to their principles ? Imagine the honest, sober and reflecting portion of every town and village in the kingdom linked together as a band of brothers, honestly resolved to investigate all subjects connected with their interests, and to prepare their minds to com-

bat with the errors and enemies of society—setting an example of propriety to their neighbours, and enjoying even in poverty a happy home. And in proportion as home is made pleasant, by a cheerful and intelligent partner, by dutiful children, and by means of comfort, which their knowledge has enabled them to snatch from the ale-house, so are the bitters of life sweetened with happiness.

"Think you a corrupt Government could perpetuate its exclusive and demoralizing influence amid a people thus united and instructed? Could a vicious aristocracy find its servile slaves to render homage to idleness and idolatry to the wealth too often fraudulently exacted from industry? Could the present gambling influences of money perpetuate the slavery of the millions, for the gains or dissipation of the few? Could corruption sit in the judgment seat—empty-headed importance in the senate-house—money-getting hypocrisy in the pulpit—and debauchery, fanaticism, poverty, and crime stalk triumphantly through the land—if the millions were educated in a knowledge of their rights? No, no, friends; and hence the efforts of the exclusive few to keep the people ignorant and divided. Be ours the task, then, to unite and instruct them; for be assured the good that is to be must be begun by ourselves."

The Working Men's Association was formed on the 16th of June, 1836. Shortly after its formation we were induced by a gentleman of the name of J. B. Bernard to have an interview and discussion with a deputation from the farmers of Cambridgeshire regarding the general distress of the country, which they attributed to the operation of "Peel's Bill." The remedy they sought to apply being an adjustment of the currency, so as to raise prices to enable them to meet their engagements, or a reduction of burthens proportionate to their means. To this raising of prices we objected as being inimical to the interests of working men; but quite agreed with them on the reduction of burthens. As, however, political power was necessary to this end we urged on them the necessity of co-operating with us for the attainment of the suffrage.

With this proposal they seemed, at the time, to concur but subsequently finding that we differed materially from them in our definition of universal suffrage a split took place between us.

To the Working Men's Association belongs the honour, I believe, of first introducing the mode of *international addresses* between the *working men* of different countries that has since been practised by other bodies so beneficially on several important occasions. Our first address of this description was issued to the Working Classes of Belgium in November, 1836. It was called forth by the persecution of a working man of Brussels, of the name of Jacob Katz; who was fined and imprisoned by the authorities for calling together a public meeting of his fellow labourers to talk over their grievances. The feeling of our address to them may be judged of by the following portion of it.

"Brothers, our enquiry has taught us that the cause of those foolish dissensions between nations lies in *the ignorance of our position in society*. Ignorance has caused us to believe that *we* were 'born to toil,' and *others* to enjoy—that we were naturally *inferior*, and should silently bow to the government of those who were pleased to call themselves *superior;* and consequently those who have governed us have done so for their own advantage, and not ours. The existence of their power depending on the ignorance, the instilled prejudice, and cupidity of the multitude, they have formed their institutions for hoodwinking and keeping them in subjection—their laws have been enacted to perpetuate their power, and administered to generate fear and submission towards self-constituted greatness, hereditary ignorance, or wealth, however unjustly acquired.

"Happily, however, for mankind, the floodgates of knowledge, which the tyrants of the world have raised to stem its torrent, are being broken down. We have tasted its refreshing stream; the mist of ignorance and delusion is past; we *perceive* the injustice practised on us, and *feel* the slavery from which we have *not yet power to free ourselves.* Our emancipation, however, will depend on the extent of

this knowledge among the working-classes of all countries, on its salutary effects in causing us to perceive *our real position in society*—in causing us to feel that we, being *the producers of wealth*, have *the first claim* to its enjoyment—that as education develops the intellect and better prepares men to fulfil their respective duties in society, those who produce *the means of education* have an *equal* and *a national right to its benefits*—that as government is for the benefit of all, all have *equal rights*, according to their abilities, to fill any of its offices; and, as the laws are said to be for the benefit of all, *all* should have a voice in their enactment. When these principles are well understood by the working-classes, the *power* which knowledge generates will soon lead to their general adoption; and then, fellow workmen, the tyrants of the world will lose their power, hypocrisy her mask, and the deceivers of mankind their credulous disciples. We are aware that even the promulgation of these principles is fraught with difficulties and danger, opposed as they are to all existing corruptions. Many of those who compose this association have suffered imprisonment and persecution in various ways for seeking to enlighten and instruct their fellow men, but they have been rewarded in seeing the extension of their principles, and, still more, in feeling the justice of their cause.

"We hear, too, and deeply lament, that many of your countrymen have suffered incarceration for expressing sentiments repugnant to the aristocracy of Belgium. That power, friends, which is founded on injustice, fears even the whispers of truth, and *force*, the weapon of conscious weakness, has been the only reasoning of kings. We hope, however, that Jacob Katz and his brave associates are now doubly assured *of the justice of their cause* from the treatment they have experienced, and that the attempt to put down the right of free discussion will stimulate thousands in its support, and raise up a power in Belgium to frown down those enemies to truth and justice."

This was replied to by an able and eloquent "Address

from the Working Men of Belgium," signed on their behalf by committees of working men at Brussels, Ghent, and Liége." * Our address, and the reply to it, were printed in many of the continental papers, among others by the *Journal du Peuple*, which was prosecuted by Louis Philippe's Government for having copied them, but was fortunately acquitted.

Following this address was the publication of a pamphlet by the Working Men's Association, entitled, "The Rotten House of Commons," being an Exposition of the State of the Franchise, and an Appeal to the Nation on the course to be pursued at that period. The Analysis was the work of a committee, the Appeal was drawn up by myself. A few extracts from it will serve to show its spirit :—

"Fellow Countrymen,—Have you ever enquired how far a just and economical system of government, a code of wise and just laws, and the abolition of the useless persons and appendages of State, would affect the interests of the present 658 members of the House of Commons ? If you have not, begin now to enquire, and you will soon lose any hopes you may have entertained from that house as at present constituted. Nay ! if you pursue your enquiries in like manner respecting the present constituents of that house, to see how far their interests are identified with yours, and how just legislation and efficient reform would deprive them of the power they have used to grind and oppress you, you will be equally hopeless of benefits from that quarter. To satisfy yourselves in this respect

* "The Address from the London Working Men's Association to their brothers in Belguim, has produced magnificent results. In Brussels, Liége, and various other parts of Belgium, Working Men's Associations are established ; they have founded two journals for the propagation of democracy, the one in French, called *Le Radical*, and the other in Flemish, entitled the *Volk Frend*, or *Folk's Friend*. In France the publication of these mutual addresses, from the Working Men of Belgium and Britain, caused a great sensation. They were republished there by the newspapers, both democratic and monarchical, the former propounding their principles as worthy of imitation, and the latter denouncing them as anarchical and damnable."—*The London Dispatch.*

propose for your own judgment and reflection the following questions :—

" Is the *Landholder*, whose interests lead him to keep up his rents by unjust and exclusive laws, a fit representative for working men ?

" Are the whole host of *Money-makers*, *Speculators*, and *Usurers*, who live on the corruptions of the system, fit representatives for the sons of labour ?

" Are the immense numbers of *Lords*, *Earls*, *Marquises*, *Knights*, *Baronets*, *Honourables*, and *Right Honourables*, who have seats in that house, fit to represent our interests ? many of whom have the certainty before them of being the *hereditary legislators* of the other house, or are the craving expectants of place or emolument ; persons who cringe in the gilded circle of a court, flutter among the gaieties of the ball-room, to court the passing smile of Royalty, or whine at the Ministers of the day ; and when the interests of the people are at stake in the Commons are often found the revelling debauchees of fashion, or the duelling wranglers of a gambling-house.

" Are the multitude of *Military* and *Naval Officers* in the present House of Commons, whose interest it is to support that system which secures them their pay and promotion, and whose only utility, at any time, is to direct one portion of our brethren to keep the other in subjection, fit to represent our grievances ?

" Have we fit representatives in the multitude of *Barristers*, *Attorneys*, and *Solicitors*, most of them seeking places, and all of them having interests depending on the dissensions and corruptions of the people ?—persons whose prosperity depends on the obscurity and intricacy of the laws, and who seek to perpetuate the interests of '*their order*' by rendering them so abstruse and voluminous that none but *law conjurers* like themselves shall understand them—persons whose *legal* knowledge (that is, of fraud and deception) often procures them seats in the Government, and the highest offices corruption can confer.

"Is the *Manufacturer* and *Capitalist*, whose exclusive monopoly of the combined powers of wood, iron, and steam enables them to cause the destitution of thousands, and who have an interest in forcing labour down to the *minimum* reward, fit to represent the interests of working men?

"Is the *Master*, whose interest it is to purchase labour at the cheapest rate, a fit representative for the *Workman*, whose interest it is to get the most he can for his labour?

"Yet such is the only description of persons composing that house, and such the interests represented, to whom we, session after session, address *our humble petitions*, and whom we in our ignorant simplicity imagine will generously sacrifice their hopes and interests by beginning the great work of political and social reformation.

"Working men, inquire if this be not true, and then if you feel with us, stand apart from all projects, and refuse to be the tools of any party, who will not, as *a first and essential measure*, give to the working classes *equal political and social rights*, so that they may send their own representatives from the ranks of those who live by labour into that house, to deliberate and determine along with *all other interests*, that the interests of the labouring classes—of those who are the foundation of the social edifice—shall not be daily sacrificed to glut the extravagance of the pampered few. If you feel with us, then you will proclaim it in the workshop, preach it in your societies, publish it from town to village, from county to county, and from nation to nation, that there is no hope for the sons of toil, till those who feel with them, who sympathize with them, and whose interests are identified with theirs, have *an equal right to determine what laws shall be enacted or plans adopted for justly governing this country*."

In February, 1837, our Association convened a public meeting at the Crown and Anchor in the Strand, for the durpose of petitioning Parliament for Universal Suffrage, no Property Qualifications, Annual Parliaments, Equal Representation, the Payment of Members, and Vote by

Ballot. The petition submitted for the approval of the meeting embraced most of the facts contained in the pamphlet alluded to, its prayer being a brief outline of a Bill embodying "the six points." In fact, the prayer of that petition formed the nucleus of the far-famed *People's Charter*, which may be said to have had its origin at this meeting. The public meeting was the most crowded and at the same time the most orderly one I ever attended. All our resolutions were unanimously agreed to, and our petition signed by about three thousand persons. Some further account regarding our proceedings in connection with this meeting will be given hereafter.

When Lord John Russell proposed to Parliament his infamous resolutions for the coercion of the Canadians (in 1837), proposing to destroy their right of suffrage, and to compel them to be plundered and enslaved by a few officials in the interests of England, our Association, in common with all right-thinking men, felt indignant on the subject. We accordingly called a public meeting to petition Parliament in their favour, which, in common with our own members, was addressed by Sir Wm. Molesworth, Col. Thompson, D. W. Harvey, J. T. Leader, O'Connor and others. As the petition agreed to set forth their most prominent grievances, as well as our own views, I deem it necessary to insert the whole of it, as it was drawn up by myself.

"That your petitioners are deeply impressed with the conviction that the colonial policy of England has for many centuries past been fraught with tyranny and injustice towards the mass of the people.

"That by far the greater number of our colonies have been originated by means no-ways justifiable on principles of morality; and to establish and secure which have millions of money been wasted, and millions of our brethren been doomed to an untimely end.

"That when by their sacrifices they have been secured, instead of regarding them as auxiliaries to the progress of civilization, and teaching them the most efficient means of developing their natural resources so as to promote the

general welfare of humanity, we seem to have considered them as legitimate objects of our prey, or as places where the shoots and underlings of despotism might practise their oppression, shameless and regardless of consequences.

"That the history of our colonial government in the Canadas is pregnant with evils springing from such a source; and now, after years of complaints and petitioning for justice, we find your Honourable House about to stifle their supplications by as wanton and flagrant an act of despotism as that which, when imposed on the American people, aroused them to proclaim their celebrated Declaration of Independence.

"That, regarding the people of Canada as brothers in interest, we have carefully investigated into their grievances, a brief outline of which we respectfully submit to your Honourable House, in order that the working classes of England may determine how far they will sanction the outrage about to be inflicted on their Canadian brethren by your House as at present constituted, how far they will suffer a brave and oppressed people to be effectually enslaved to glut the appetites of hungry officials or the peculating delinquents of an insignificant party.

"The Canadians inform us that, though they possess an extension of the suffrage almost universal, and have representatives in the House of Assembly honestly seeking to promote the welfare and happiness of the whole people, but that these inestimable blessings are rendered nearly useless by the intolerable despotism of the Legislative and Executive Councils, whose selfish powers are continually exercised in thwarting the wants and wishes of the people.

"That the Legislative Council is chosen for life by the King of England! that it is for the most part composed of Government officers, their clerks, their dependents, the clergy of the Established Church, and a few successful merchants;" and that this Assembly is responsible to none but the King of England, *acting through the officials of the Colonial Office.* They complain that this is a body factiously opposed to the feelings and wants of the people;

that it is the stronghold of oppression and abuses ; and that all the beneficial measures of the House of Assembly are rendered useless by this irresponsible body.

" They complain also that the Executive Council, or privy-council of the Governor, being composed of the judges and Government officers, responsible only to the King (or rather the Colonial Office) have taken all the waste lands of the Colony, as well as the saleable timber found thereon, which they dispose of for the personal advantage of their members, their friends and underlings, as well as for corrupting the representation of the people, and with the unjust plea of their being the hereditary possessions of the King, deprive the Canadians of the means of improving their country or educating their children.

" They complain that their judges are not made responsible to the people, nor can they be impeached for misconduct by the House of Assembly, as English judges can by the Commons' House of Parliament ; that they are only responsible to the Executive Council, *of which they themselves form a part*, and that by this irresponsibility the source of justice is poisoned, and the cases of the grossest peculation and delinquency have received the countenance and support of this body.

" They complain that notwithstanding *four-fifths* of the inhabitants are Catholics in religion, and that men of all creeds and religious opinions live harmoniously amongst them, that a Dominant Church is set up, and religious prejudices are sought to be engendered by the application of *one-seventh* of the whole land of the colony to support the clergy of the Established Church of England.

" They complain that the official party seek to foment the absurd prejudices of country and religion amongst them ; that the whole administration of Government is one of favouritism and injustice ; that the revenues of their country are employed and squandered away by persons not responsible to the people ; that they are unable to get accurate accounts of receipts or expenditure, and

when delinquency is detected, are refused the power to punish, or to prevent it in future.

"And now, after bearing with these insults and oppressions for nearly half a century; after every effort to improve their country by wise and salutary laws has been frustrated by these united aristocratic powers; and after repeated applications and petitions for justice, they have almost unanimously declared that there is no hope for the adoption of wise laws and just Government, *until the Legislative Council be elected by the people—the whole revenue placed under the control of the people—and their judges made responsible to their own Legislature, instead of to the King of England.*

"These reasonable requests having been scorned and scouted by those in power, the people of Canada have, for the last three years, refused to sanction, by the vote of their Assembly, the application of the public revenues towards paying the salaries of those official persons who continue to mar all their benevolent exertions for the public weal.

"Instead, however, of your Honourable House honestly investigating into these grievances, or conceding to those just and reasonable demands, we find you sanctioning His Majesty's ministers *in setting aside the people and their representatives altogether;* dispensing with the necessary vote, as guaranteed by their charter, and paying the salaries of those official persons in spite of the Canadian people.

"This conduct appearing to your petitioners to be highly tyrannical—involving the question of liberty for the many, or despotic rule for the few—and which injustice we feel satisfied will never be tamely submitted to by the Canadian people, especially when they have the history of the past, and the bright example of the present democracy of America to refer to, of what can be effected by a united people, when free from the mercenary grasp of aristocratic or kingly dominion. Your petitioners therefore pray your Honourable House that you will yield to the wishes of

the Canadians, and allow them to elect the Legislative Council, place the revenue of their country at their disposal, and allow their judges to be made responsible to their own legislature, instead of to the King of England."

Our petition was followed up by others from different parts of the country, but the Whigs, ever too proud to listen to the supplications of the humbler classes, and seconded in all their coercive plans and base proposals by "a Reformed Parliament," carried all the measures with a high hand for the subjugation of the Canadian people. But Canada was too near America for them to bow their heads silently to such injustice; they met, and denounced the atrocious resolutions of the Whigs, from one extremity of the colony to the other. They passed resolutions declaring that as their public revenue was imposed without their control, and was about to be made a further means of oppression in the hands of their enemies, that they would diminish it as much as possible, by abstaining from the consumption of tea, tobacco, sugar, and rum, and as far as possible from all the manufactures of England. The excitement of the people was further stimulated by Governor Gosford, a pompous aristocrat, commencing a system of dismissing from the magistracy, and other offices, all persons who presumed to attend these patriotic meetings of the people. It was at this period that our Working Men's Association sent the following "Address to the Canadian People."

"Friends in the cause of freedom, brothers under oppression, and fellow-citizens living in hope—

"We have witnessed with delight the noble spirit you have evinced against the despotic ordinances and tyrant mandates of your oppressors. Inspired by the justice of your cause, you have nobly begun the glorious work of resistance; may the spirit of perseverance inspire you onwards, till the basely-concocted resolutions are withdrawn, your constitutional rights and wishes respected, or your independence secured by a charter won by your bravery!

"While freemen stand erect in the conscious pride of thinking right and acting well their honest front will oft-times scare the tyrant from his purpose, or check his mad career; for experience has taught them that *liberty in a smock-frock is more than a match for tyranny in armour;* but if they chance to crouch submission, or yield but a hair's-breadth to his wish, their doom is fixed; for tyrants delight to crush the yielding suppliant slave.

"Onward, therefore, brothers in your struggle—you have justice on your side, and good men's aspirations that you win. Nay, we trust that the wide-spreading information of the present age has so far enlightened the minds, and expanded the sympathies of most classes of men, that even the British soldier (cut off and secluded as he is from society), on turning to the annals of atrocious deeds which mark the track of kingly despotism, and more especially those which characterized its career of cruelty against American liberty, when the savage yell, the tomahawk and the scalping-knife were the frightful accompaniments of the bayonet, must blush for his country and his profession.

"Yes, friends, the cause of DEMOCRACY has truth and reason on its side, and knavery and corruption are alone its enemies. To justly distribute the blessings of plenty which the sons of industry have gathered, so as to bless without satiety all mankind—to expand by the blessings of education, the divinely-mental powers of man, which tyrants seek to mar and stultify—to make straight the crooked paths of justice, and to humanize the laws—to purify the world of all the crimes which want and lust of power have nurtured—is the end and aim of the democrat; to act the reverse of this is the creed and spirit of aristocracy. Yet of this latter class are those who govern nations—men whose long career of vice too often forms a pathway to their power—who, when despotic deeds have stirred their subjects up to check their villainy, declaim against 'sedition,' talk of 'designing men,' and impiously invoke the attributes of the Deity to scare them from their sacred purpose.

"It gives us great pleasure to learn, friends, that you are not so easily scared *by proclamation law*—by the decree of a junta against a whole nation. Surely you know and feel, though Governor Gosford may not, that 'A NATION NEVER CAN REBEL.' For when the liberties of a million of people are prostrated to the dust at the will of a grasping, despicable minority—when an attempt is made to destroy their representative rights, the only existing bond of allegiance, the only power through which laws can be justly enforced, is broken. Then has the time arrived when society is dissolved into its original elements, placing each man in a position freely to choose for himself those institutions which are the most consonant to his feelings, or which will best secure to him his life, labour, and posessions. If the mother country will not render *justice* to her colonies in return for their allegiance—if she will not be content with *mutual* obligations, but seek to make them the prey of military nabobs and hungry lordlings, executing their decrees with force, she must not be disappointed to find her offspring deserting her for her unnatural absurdities and monstrous cruelty.

"Your Legislative and Executive Councils, feeling the great inconvenience of submitting to your constitutional rights, have endeavoured to frown you into compliance by *British* Legislation.

"You have wisely questioned such authority, and justly branded thei. decrees with the infamy they deserve. They now loudly threaten you with Gosford-law of their own enactment. Should you be firm to your purpose (as we think you will), they will have recourse to diplomacy and cunning. They will amuse you with the name of Royalty, talk of your youthful Queen's affection for you, and resort to every specious art their craft can dictate—but they will carefully keep back from royal ears the wrongs they have generated—the crimes of open plunder and private peculation which have made the breach between you; they'll tell their garbled tale of 'treason and sedition,' poisoning the youthful mind to suit their purpose.

"Canadian brethren! hear us, though we be only working men;—trust not too much to princely promises when your own ears are the witnesses; less so, when oceans roll between, and interested chieftains tell the tale. Trust to your righteous cause, and honest deeds to make that cause secure.

"We have received, with considerable satisfaction, your resolutions approving of our humble exertions in your behalf—though we did but our duty in endeavouring to arouse the feelings of our fellow-men against the injustice we saw was about to be perpetrated on a distant portion of our brethren; and in this we have been successful to a degree we did not anticipate, for we have received letters of approval from considerable bodies of working men joining their feelings and sympathies with ours towards you. Do not, therefore, believe that the working millions of England have any feelings in common with your oppressors; for if they have not unitedly condemned their infamy, it is that the severity of their own misfortunes and oppression diverts their attention from those of their neighbours. When the voice of the millions shall be heard in the senate house, when *they* shall possess power to decree justice, our colonies will cease to be regarded as nurseries for despots, where industry is robbed to pamper vice.

"We beg to congratulate you on the number of choice spirits which the injustice inflicted on your country has called into action. With such leaders to keep alive the sacred flame of freedom, and such devotedness and self-denial as you have evinced from the onset, we augur to you success.

"Hoping that you will continue to stir up the timid and cheer on the brave—to teach your children to lisp the song of freedom, and your maidens to spurn the hand of a slave—and that you may yet witness the sun of independence smiling on your rising cities, your cheerful homes, tangled forests, and frozen lakes, is the ardent wish of the members of the Working Men's Association."

This Address was widely circulated in Canada and called forth an admirable spirit-stirring reply, drawn up by the Permanent and Central Committee of the County of Montreal, and signed on their behalf by twenty persons ; among them Louis Joseph Papineau, Raymond Plessis, and most of the leading members of the House of Assembly. The engrossed *parchment copy* of the reply, however, never reached us ; we heard that it was destroyed when the office of the *Vindicator* newspaper was burnt down by a Tory mob.

Vain, however, were all petitions, were all efforts to check the despotic proceedings of our Government towards the Canadians ; and it was not till after they had been goaded into madness and revolt, that Lord Durham was sent over to do something towards healing the wounds that despotism had inflicted. What, however, the Whigs would not yield to peaceful prayers and petitions, they were subsequently obliged to concede, in order to quench the embers of rebellion, which their merciless soldiers and officials could not achieve. And now, when justice has triumphed and the people are supreme, no colony so loyal, no people so true to the mother country, as the French and English Canadians.

By this time our example in London had caused a great number of Working Men's Associations to be organized in different parts of the country ; and we, being solicited from many towns for some personal aid towards the formation of others, deputed Messrs. Hetherington, Cleave, Vincent, and Hartwell, to go out at different times as missionaries for that purpose. They were eminently successful in promoting the formation of many of those societies ; and did great service by their able and stirring appeals to the people in favour of our principles. It was to thank a great number of those associations for their kindness towards our missionaries that we issued our "Address to Working Men's Associations" ; which has been already noticed in the early part of this chapter.

Our petition in favour of the suffrage agreed to at the Crown and Anchor, was trusted to Mr. Roebuck for

presentation to Parliament ; we believing him to be one of the most staunch and resolute advocates of democratic principles in the House of Commons. He, having resolved to found a motion on it in favour of Universal Suffrage, was desirous of having the support of all those members of the House who were considered Radicals. This induced us to issue out a circular to all those we believed to be such, inviting them to meet us on the subject at the British Coffee-House, in Cockspur Street, on the 31st of May, 1837. This meeting was attended by a number of our own members, and by the following members of the House of Commons :—Joseph Hume, D. O'Connell, Dr. Bowring, J. T. Leader, Col. Thompson, Benjamin Hawes, Wm. S. Crawford, and Charles Hindley. Having been appointed by our association to introduce the business, I informed them that our object in inviting them was to ascertain how far Members of Parliament were prepared to make exertions for carrying those principles into practice, which from their speeches and writings we believed most of them to entertain. I concluded some further remarks by putting to them the following questions :—In the first place, would they support the petition for Universal Suffrage, etc., which Mr. Roebuck had to present from the association ? And in the second place, would they bring in and vote for a Bill embracing the principles contained in the prayer of that petition ? *Mr. Hume* replied by saying that he agreed with most of the principles contained in the petition ; but differed on some of the details such as annual parliaments, thinking triennial preferable ; and he thought the country not prepared to carry them into practice. *Mr. O'Connell* also agreed with the principles, though not with all the details ; but he doubted the policy of pressing them with the present constituencies. *Mr. B. Hawes* did not agree with all the principles of the petition, neither with annual parliaments nor Universal Suffrage ; he would have to surrender up his seat if he did. *Mr. C. Hindley* agreed with all our principles, but feared the people were not sufficiently enlightened. *Dr. Bowring* also agreed with the principles of our petition, but thought

we should progressively seek to carry them into practice; he thought we should begin with household suffrage. *Col. Thompson* agreed with our principles, but doubted the policy of forcing them at present. *Sharman Crawford* agreed most fully with the principles of our petition, and differed from the other hon. members as regards their fears of impracticability; he thought the way to make these principles practicable was by agitation and enquiry. *Mr. Leader* agreed with the petition, and thought some steps should be taken towards carrying the principles it contained into practice. After hearing the different speeches of which the above is a mere abstract, taken from our minutes, I replied, that it was evident enough that gentlemen thought more of their *seats* in Parliament than they did of their *principles;* for if they entertained a sincere attachment for them they would continue to advocate them at all times and in all places, with the view of creating a public opinion in their favour; and whether *in* or *out* of Parliament they would care little, provided those principles they believed essential to their country's welfare were rapidly extended. But instead of doing this we found them professing our principles on the hustings, and on other occasions out of doors, with the mere object it would seem of pleasing the multitude, but never taking any steps in Parliament to cause the principles they professed to become a practical reality. These observations, spoken rather warmly, called up Mr. O'Connell, who began a very warm and eloquent philippic against me, commencing by saying that the gentleman who had just addressed you has spoken with all the impassioned eloquence of *impracticability*, not very likely to be attended with any beneficial results. And then he continued in a strain calculated to crush me, by the mere power of words, had he been addressing an Irish audience. But he had no sooner done than he was replied to by Messrs. Cleave, Hetherington, and others, who very soon showed him how hollow all mere professions and pretensions were regarding our political rights, unaccompanied by earnest efforts for their realization. This meeting having been adjourned, on a motion

by Mr. O'Connell, on the following week he brought forward a written "Plan of an Association to procure Justice for the Working Classes, by an effectual reform of the Legislature," * which he introduced by a speech in its favour. To this I replied that the formation of a new society for this object was not necessary in England, as our own Association, as well as the various Working Men's Associations throughout the country had the same or similar objects in view as the one suggested. What was wanted was, that some steps should be taken by Members of Parliament towards the carrying of those objects into practice. With that view our Association had prepared four resolutions which I had been requested to submit for their approval or rejection, handing them at the same time to Mr. O'Connell. He having perused them for a few moments got up and proposed the first of them, which, having been seconded by Mr. Hindley, was unanimously adopted. The three others were agreed to in the same unanimous manner. The following are the resolutions :—

"1st. That we agree to support any proposition for universal suffrage, made on the Petition emanating from the Working Men's Association, when presented to the House of Commons by Mr. Roebuck.

Proposed by Mr. D. O'Connell,
Seconded by Mr. C. Hindley.

"2nd. That we agree to support and vote for a Bill or Bills to be brought into the House of Commons, embodying the principles of universal suffrage, equal representation, free selection of representatives without reference to property, the ballot, and short parliaments of fixed duration, the limit not to exceed three years.

Moved by Mr. D. O'Connell,
Seconded by Mr. C. Hindley.

"3rd. That we agree to support and vote for a Bill or Bills to be brought into the House of Commons for such

* I have the original of the Plan by me.

a reform in the House of Lords as shall render it responsible to the people.

Moved by Mr. D. O'Connell,
Seconded by Mr. W. Sharman Crawford.

"4th. That a Committee of twelve persons be appointed to draw up a Bill or Bills in a legal form embodying the principles agreed to, and that they be submitted to another meeting of the Liberal Members of Parliament, and the Working Men's Association.

Moved by Mr. J. T. Leader,
Seconded by Mr. Hartwell."

The following were the persons appointed :—

Messrs. D. O'Connell,	Messrs. H. Hetherington,
J. A. Roebuck,	J. Cleave,
J. T. Leader,	J. Watson,
C. Hindley,	R. Moore,
Col. Thompson,	W. Lovett,
W. S. Crawford,	H. Vincent.

After these four resolutions were agreed to we told the members present that we intended to write them out fairly on a large sheet of paper, and to go round to their and other members' houses to obtain the signatures of as many as we could get ; an arrangement to which they all assented. Accordingly the next morning, Mr. Cleave and myself waited first on Mr. O'Connell, who readily signed them, and at the same time gave us a list of such of the Irish Members as he thought would also. He expressed himself highly gratified at the result of our two meetings, and said that he believed great good would result from them. Observing very jocosely to me, "By the powers, Lovett, you are right after all, for the Working Classes cannot be expected to strive for any extension of the franchise, unless they are made participators of the benefit." So far did he then seem to be in earnest, of which, I am sorry to say, I have since had occasion to express doubts.*

* My doubts in his sincerity, in this particular, have since been fully confirmed. On Wednesday, June 11th, 1856, I met Mr. Swain

We then took our document round to other members, and had only got nine signatures appended to it when the King, William the Fourth, died, which put a stop to our progress, for the Parliament being dissolved in consequence, the members soon posted off to their several constituencies. We were, therefore, obliged to wait till the new Parliament was chosen, and had again assembled in town, before we could call the committee together who had been appointed to draw up the bill for the suffrage. In the interim, however, we put forth the following "Address to Reformers on the forthcoming Elections," informing them of what had been done, and what were our intentions :—

"Fellow Countrymen,—It is now nearly six years since the Reform Bill became a part of the laws of our country. To carry that measure, despite the daring advocates of corruption, the co-operation of the millions was sought for, and cheerfully and honestly given. They threw their hearts into the contest, and would have risked their lives to obtain that which they were led to believe would give *to all* the blessings of LIBERTY. Alas! their hopes were excited by promises which have not been kept, and their expectations of freedom have been bitterly disappointed in seeing the men, whom they had assisted to power, spurning their petition with contempt, and binding them down by still more slavish enactments :—at seeing the new constituency they had raised, forgetting their protes-

—a well known friend of Wm. Cobbett, who, in the course of conversation, informed me, that, shortly after our interview with O'Connell, Mr. Williams, the Member for Coventry, came into his shop in Fleet Street, and requested him, *in a confidential manner*, to warn the members of the Working Men's Association against O'Connell; as he had informed him, that he had signed our resolutions, and would get as many members as he could to sign them, *for the purpose of frustrating the intentions of the Working Men's Association.* I may add that we had previously heard of this conversation through Mr. Swain's foreman, who had overheard the warning given, but now the whole particulars were given me, and confirmed by the principal. Mr. Swain further said that this was the chief cause of O'Connell losing his seat for Dublin, the liberal electors being informed of this treachery.

tations, and selfishly leaguing themselves with their oppressors. But *Liberty* has a power which watches over her destiny—the selfishness of those men who sought only their own exclusive interests has been frustrated for the want of that very enthusiasm which their ingratitude has subdued into apathy. The public voice which raised them up, by its silence alone permits their enemies to triumph over them.

"The result of this ungrateful conduct must now be apparent to every reflecting enquirer; the people, seeing both parties intent on keeping them in subjection, and equally the object of their prey, have looked with apathy on their contentions for power and plunder, waiting the events of time; and thus while *one* faction is hypocritically talking of liberty, the *other* is sparing no pains to destroy the spirit of freedom that has gone forth, and to re-establish Tory ascendancy and misrule.

"What, at this important crisis, then, is the duty of every honest reformer? Is it to allow despotism to triumph as it inevitably will unless the slumbering energies of the millions be aroused to prevent it?

"But the people have learnt a profitable lesson from experience, and will not again be stimulated to contend for any measure which excludes them from its advantages. They now perceive that most of our oppressive laws and institutions, and the consequent ignorance and wretchedness to which we are exposed, *can be traced to one common source*—EXCLUSIVE LEGISLATION; and they therefore have their minds intently fixed *on the destruction of this great and pernicious monopoly;* being satisfied that, while the power of law-making is confined *to the few*, the exclusive interests *of the few* will be secured at the expense of the many.

"Seeing this, it will be well for their cause if honest Reformers throw their fears and scruples aside, and generously repose confidence in those who have no exclusive interests to protect, unjust privileges to secure, or monopolies to retain: but whose interest is in the peace and harmony of society, and in having a parliament selected

from *the wise and good of every class*, devising the most efficient means for advancing the happiness of all.

"But it has been urged, as a plea to keep up exclusive legislation, that the people are *too ignorant* to be trusted with the elective franchise. Are Englishmen less enlightened than Americans?—and has the exercise of their political liberty proved them not to have deserved it?—Nay, in our own country, are the unrepresented *as a body* more ignorant than the present possessors of the franchise?—Can they possibly return more enemies to liberty, more self-interested legislators than are returned by the present constituency to Parliament? The ignorance of which they complain is the offspring of exclusive legislation, for the exclusive few from time immemorial have ever been intent in blocking up every avenue to knowledge. POLITICAL RIGHTS necessarily stimulate men to enquiry—give self-respect—lead them to know their duties as citizens—and, under a wise government, would be made the best corrective of vicious and intemperate habits.

"Fellow countrymen,—with these facts and convictions strongly impressed upon us, we have from the commencement of our Association diligently sought to impress on our fellow-men the necessity of contending for political power as the most certain means of redressing all their wrongs. We have shown in the addresses and publications we have put forth the utter hopelessness of their ever obtaining justice from the House of Commons as it is now constituted; and have repeatedly endeavoured to convince them that the great work of political regeneration *must begin with themselves*. We have assured them that when they shall evince such a disposition, assistance would be afforded them by all those who have their emancipation at heart. How far we were right in this latter conclusion we are about to inform you.

"It is now generally known to Reformers (because great publicity has been given to it), that a large public meeting was held at the Crown and Anchor, on the 28th of February last. At that meeting a petition was agreed to, embodying the principles of Universal Suffrage, Equal

Representation, Annual Parliaments, No Property Qualification, Vote by Ballot, and Payment of Members; and at the same time most of the Liberal Members of Parliament were called upon to give it their support. We have accordingly held two meetings at the British Coffee-House, Cockspur Street, with several of these gentlemen—have amicably discussed the important principles contained in that petition—and nine Members of Parliament have voluntarily attached their signatures, and are pledged to the following important resolutions :—

(*Here follow the Resolutions already mentioned at page* 116.)

"In the course of a few weeks this Bill will be prepared and printed for circulation, under the title of 'THE PEOPLE'S CHARTER,' and will form a rallying-point for Radical Reformers; *a standard by which to test all those who call themselves friends of the People.*

"In the recent exertions we have made, among those called the *Liberal Members of Parliament*, we regret to find that a considerable number of them (who even admit the justice of these great principles, and consider them essential to the well-being of society), timidly shrink from the performance of a most sacred duty, apprehensive of the ignorance, prejudice, or selfishness of their constituents, and are, indeed, fearful of losing their seats in Parliament. Now, to break down those narrow prejudices and lead onward the public mind, great moral courage and intellectual powers are necessary; and if these qualities are not found among the reflecting few, *whose minds are convinced of the justice of their principles*, where can we hope to find them? Nay; if, on the contrary, we find them disposed to administer to the selfishness or ignorance of their constituents—to doubt publicly what they believe privately—to retard by petty measures important principles, and place greater importance on a seat in Parliament than on the enlightenment of the people, and the progress of liberty, what hopes can we have of happiness for ourselves or posterity?

"In the course of a few weeks a general election will take place, and the contest will be, whether the People or the Aristocracy shall prevail; whether such timely reforms in Church and State shall be effected as the social welfare demands, or a monopolizing faction retain their power, and perpetuate their corruptions. The time has gone by *for any go-between class* to possess efficient power to stem the evils of aristocratic sway without the aid of the millions. To obtain that aid their political rights must be conceded to them; they have recently learnt to appreciate just principles and not, as formerly, to be amused in the setting up of Whigs, Tories, or Radicals, as idols of their political salvation.

"Let those great principles, therefore, form the pledge of every candidate who presents himself on the hustings. Fellow-men! do not be led away by promises of repealing the detested Poor Law, or any of the other infamous laws which Whig and Tory have united to enact, and to laud their excellence, *unless the promise be accompanied by the pledge of Universal Suffrage, and all the other great essentials of self-government.*

"Honest electors, do not therefore shrink from the task of examining and exposing every shuffling candidate, who, from whatever pretext, seeks to perpetuate exclusive legislation. And do you, *the unrepresented*, exert your utmost powers at this momentous crisis; unitedly wait upon each candidate (for as the producers of wealth you have the first claim to his attention), tell him your own tale, convince him that you are not the ignorant destructives which knaves and sycophants would fain make him believe, 'too ignorant for freedom, seeking to mar your own happiness by destroying the means and prospects of others.'

"Fellow countrymen! we are now at the commencement of a new reign, and from the promises of youthful, unbiassed feelings, as well as from the education given to our Queen, great expectations have been generated. But 'put not your trust in princes' was said by a wise man; and, when we find those in her council whose long catalogue

of bitter deeds can scarcely be paralleled in the worst days of misrule, without mistrusting *her good intentions*, we had better repose confidence in the justice of our own claims, and our united efforts to advance them, than in the hopes or promises of royalty.

"Among those appointed to prepare the bills we have alluded to, are persons of different views and various opinions on many important subjects. But when they are thus cordially prepared to co-operate with the millions, to contend for their equal rights, and to strive to place them in a situation to manage their own affairs, politically and socially, the confidence and cordial support of the millions should be afforded them to carry those measures into effect. We therefore earnestly call upon you to organize and prepare yourselves to render them every possible assistance. *On yourselves success must depend.* You formed yourselves into societies, you met and petitioned by thousands to force a measure in which you were not included; show therefore by similar demonstrations, that you are not unmindful of your own interests. Arouse, therefore, you the unrepresented millions—and you honest and true-hearted electors—and call upon your representatives to join the ranks of those who resolve to contend for a just and essential measure of reform for the whole people. Working Men's associations should be established in every town and village throughout the country, and the wise and good of every class who seek justice for the many should be enrolled among them. The associations and unions already formed should be up and doing; they should meet legally, petition firmly, and never cease their laudable exertions till their end is accomplished. An opinion has gone forth that it is a folly to petition. Working men, do not give your enemies an argument that 'the people seek not to obtain those measures, as they fail to petition for them.' True it is that your petitions are but little regarded in the Houses of Parliament, but still we know that it is the most efficient means of creating, guiding, and ascertaining public opinion.

"We caution you not to form *branch associations*, because

the Corresponding Act is still in force ; nor to correspond *privately*, but publicly through the press. We invite one or more intelligent radical reformers in every town to become *honorary* members of our association in London, which they can do, *without payment*, if recommended by some known radical, and thus they can be made acquainted with all our proceedings in a *legal* manner. We intend in a few days to give increased publicity to our rules and objects, and will shortly give you further information through the columns of those newspapers which are disposed to assist us.

" In conclusion, we urge you to organize yourselves and resolve on victory ! *With Union* everything will be accomplished ; *without Union* nothing ! "

Copies of this Address were forwarded to all the working men's associations, radical associations, and political unions we were connected with ; among others to the Birmingham Union, which, from its former prestige, we were very anxious should declare in favour of universal suffrage. We had previously sent letters and messages to this important body, and finally sent down Mr. Hetherington as a missionary to urge on them the importance of the subject ; but they, considering themselves pledged to the principles of the reform bill, remained for a long time staunch to that measure. A few weeks, however, previous to our issuing the above address, Mr. Atwood had begun to talk of the reform bill being " nothing better than a witch's bantling," and of " the new set of borough-mongers being little better than the old " ; and in the course of three months later, on a motion of Mr. P. H. Muntz and Mr. Douglas, they came out nobly in favour of the suffrage.

CHAPTER VI

When Queen Victoria ascended the throne our association, in common with other bodies, prepared what we believed to be a loyal and outspoken address to her. Having appointed a deputation for the purpose of presenting it, I sent the following letter to the Secretary of the Home Department :—

" Working Men's Association,
" 6, Upper North Place,
" Grays Inn Road.
" Sept. 1st, 1837.

" My Lord,—The Working Men's Association of London having prepared an address to her Majesty, they are desirous of having it presented to her personally by a deputation of six persons, whom they have selected for that purpose. They have therefore requested me to ascertain from your Lordship when it will please her Majesty that they shall wait on her with the address ?

" I remain,
" Your most obedient servant,
" Wm. Lovett,
" *Secretary.*

" To the Right Hon. Lord John Russell,
" Sec. of State for the Home Department."

The answer received to this was the following :—

" Whitehall,
" Sept. 6th, 1837.

" Sir,—I am directed by Lord John Russell to inform you, in reply to your letter of the 1st inst., that the address of the Working Men's Association cannot be presented

till her Majesty holds *a levée*, when the deputation must attend in *court dress*. No time for a levée is yet fixed; but it will be publicly announced in the *Gazette*.

"I am, sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"F. MAULE."

To this we sent the following reply, accompanied with the address :—

"Working Men's Association,

"6, Upper North Place,

"Grays Inn Road,

"Sept. 13th, 1837.

"My Lord,—According to your answer of the 6th inst., we find that we are precluded by those forms which Gothic ignorance has imposed, and custom sanctified, from personally presenting our address; for with every respect for those forms which make personal cleanliness and respectful behaviour necessary qualifications to approach her Majesty, we have neither the means nor the inclination to indulge in such absurdities as dress-swords, coats and wigs. We beg, therefore, to request that your lordship, in your official capacity, will at the earliest opportunity present our address to her Majesty, in hopes she may chance to read the sentiments of a portion of her *working-class population*, which the necessity of appearing in court dress excludes from her presence. We hope, my lord, that day is not distant when some better means will be devised for letting the sovereign hear of the addresses and petitions of the people.

"We remain,

"Your lordship's obedient servants,

"The members of the Working Men's Association.

"(Signed) WM. LOVETT,

Secretary.

"To the Right Hon. Lord John Russell,

"Secretary of State for the Home Department.

" To the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and its Dependencies.

" The Address of the undersigned Members of the Working Men's Association.

" Madam,—While we approach your Majesty in the spirit of plain men seeking their political and social rights, apart from mere names, forms, or useless ceremonies, we yield to none in the just fulfilment of our duties, or in the ardent wish that our country may be made to advance to the highest point of prosperity and happiness.

" The feelings which spring from this desire prompt us to call the attention of your Majesty to the present condition of the people, and to point out a course which we are fully persuaded is calculated to promote our wishes, and to produce that result which every sincere friend to mankind must earnestly anticipate.

" The country over which your Majesty has been called on to preside, has by the powers and industry of its inhabitants been made to teem with abundance, and were all its resources *wisely developed and justly distributed*, would impart ample means of happiness to *all its inhabitants*.

" But, by many monstrous anomalies springing out of the constitution of society, *the corruptions* of government, and *the defective education of mankind*, we find the bulk of the nation toiling slaves from birth till death—thousands wanting food, or subsisting on the scantiest pittance, having neither time nor means to obtain instruction, much less of cultivating the higher faculties and brightest affections, but forced by their situation to engender enmity, jealousy, and contention, and too often to become the victims of intemperance and crime.

" We find the majority of the middling classes equally the toiling, and by far too many of them the avaricious pursuers of wealth ;—often following that which eludes their grasp, or if attained, fails of imparting happiness ;—racked with the cares of business, distrust and suspicion, and often filled with apprehensions of bankruptcy and

[illegible]

factions who live on abuses, and profit at the expense of the millions, to persuade you to any course of policy other than that of *right and justice*. And we respectfully submit to your Majesty, that *it is not just*, that out of a population of *twenty-five millions of people*, only *eight hundred thousand* should have the power of electing what is called the Commons' House of Parliament; since so small a number, divided as it is, subjects by far the greater portion to be *bribed* or *intimidated* by the wealthy and the powerful; but, that in accordance with justice, those who by their industry support and defend their country have *the first claim* to political rights.

"That it is a flagrant act of injustice that the affairs of a great nation should be made dependent *on two factions;* each seeking its own exclusive interest, and both opposed to the progress of knowledge and the happiness of the people.

"That it is cruel as well as unjust that our Dissenting and Catholic brethren should be compelled to support a Church from whose doctrines they dissent, and whose profligate expenditure they hold in abhorrence.

"That the injustice which the Whig and Tory factions have for a long time past inflicted on our Irish brethren has generated and perpetuated the extremes of want and wretchedness amongst them, and calls for an immediate and radical remedy.

"That the poverty and ignorance which pervade numerous districts of the kingdom justly call for investigation and immediate redress; which can only be effected by a Parliament selected from the wise and good of every class, to consult all interests, and to protect all just rights.

"To effect, however, these essential reforms your Majesty must not be persuaded to believe that a Whig or Tory administration is necessary to secure the peace and safety of your government; but you must call to your cabinet those who are disposed to render *an equality of political rights to the millions;* who earnestly desire *the progress of knowledge*, and *a just diffusion of the bounties of heaven.*

"But we entreat your Majesty that, whoever may be in

your councils, you will instruct them, as a first and essential measure of reform, to prepare a Bill for extending the Right of Suffrage *to all the adult population of the kingdom ;* excepting such as may be justly incapacitated by crime or defective of the light of reason ; together with such other essential details as shall enable all men to exercise their political rights unmolested.

" Then will the voice of the millions be raised to bless you, their arms to defend you from factions at home or despots abroad, and then will they transmit your name to posterity, as the first to break through the trammels of courtly prejudice to render them justice."

In about a week's time from the sending of this Address to Lord John Russell we received the following letter :—

" Whitehall, Sept. 22, 1837.

" Sir,—I am directed by Lord John Russell to inform you that he has not failed to lay before the Queen the Address of certain of ' the Working Men's Association of London ' which you transmitted to his Lordship for presentation.

" I am your obedient servant,

" Mr. William Lovett, &c." " F. Maule.

This Address and correspondence were circulated very widely by the newspaper press of that period, and called forth praise or censure according to the politics they espoused. The policy, however, of the Secretary of State in refusing its personal presentation to the youthful Queen by a portion of her working class subjects, *unless in court dress*, was very generally condemned, even by many of those who differed from us in principle. And by many of them the free mode of presenting addresses and petitions to the chief magistrate of Republican America and Despotic Turkey was strongly contrasted with our court's pompous folly, and that with all our boasted freedom.

About this period, also, the Whig and Tory press neglected no possible opportunity of putting forth their em-

bittered attacks, or vending their sneers against the Republican Institutions of America. The deeds of individuals, the clamours of party, or the bickerings of rival states, always afforded in their eyes conclusive proofs of the evils of Republican Government; they never once presuming to entertain the notion, that similar follies and contentions at home, told equally powerful against the evils of our own blessed Monarchical Institutions. Our Association—conceiving that they might do something to neutralize the prejudice thus sought to be engendered between the people of two countries; at least show to the Working Classes of America, that we *their working class brethren* in England entertained far different views respecting them, although not insensible to their defects—sent them the following Address:—

"Citizens of the American Republic,—We address you in that spirit of fraternity which becomes working men in all the countries of the world; for, as the subjugation and misery of our classs can be traced *to our ignorance and dissensions*—as the knaves and hypocrites of the world live by our follies, and the tyrants of the world are strong because we, the working millions, are divided—so assuredly will *the mutual instruction and united exertions* of our class in all countries rapidly advance the world's emancipation.

"In addressing you, our fellow-workmen, we are influenced by no other desires than those of mutual enquiry and brotherly friendship; and we therefore hope you will not allow our mutual enemies to influence your opinions by impugning our motives, should our sentiments not altogether accord with your own.

"We are not of that number who seek to stigmatize your institutions because there may be defects in your general or local legislation; but of those who would urge you to purify them of every blemish which mars their excellence, and keeps you from the full enjoyment of their fruits; so that the king and priest-ridden nations of the earth might witness the results of a true demo-

cracy, producing abundance to the labourer, and indigence only to the idle.

"We are anxious to express our admiration of those republican institutions which were won by the valour, and secured by the wisdom of your forefathers—men who justly proclaimed the rights of humanity without privilege, and made liberty and equality the basis of social happiness. Little did the fanatics of 'the altar and the throne' imagine when they shook their bloody crests in defiance of human rights, and by their envenomed decrees caused the sons of freedom to go forth to combat with the savage and the brute, that among the tangled recesses of your forests a secure resting-place for liberty would be found; and that among her sons a Jefferson would arise to proclaim those principles which will be revered and honoured when kingly and priestly follies are despised or forgotten.

"You have practically exhibited to the world that a throne is not a necessary appendage to a nation's greatness; that wars are not necessary, either to maintain dignity or to balance power; that liberty and property may be secure without police spies, or hirelings in armour; that the arts and sciences may flourish without the fostering of either title or privilege; that morality may survive the downfall of a state religion; and that presidents perform their duty for £4,000 a year, much better than kings or queens ever did, or ever will do, for £400,000.

"You have surmounted difficulties yet to be overcome, and climbed heights of political liberty yet to be attained by all the nations of Europe; and if you have not realized all the social and political advantages of your commanding position—nay, if you possess not the power to assist in the emancipation of others, it is high time to ask yourselves the reason, and to investigate the cause.

"Why, when your institutions are so excellently founded, when your noble race of philosophic statesmen legislated, fought, and bled, to invest you with political power, and left you as their choicest legacy the best advice to use it—why, after sixty years of freedom, have you not progressed further?

" Why, are you to so great an extent, ruled by men who speculate on your credulity and thrive by your prejudices ? Why have lawyers a prepondering influence in your country ?—men whose interests lie in your corruptions and dissensions, and in making intricate the plainest questions affecting your welfare ? Why has so much of your fertile country been parcelled out between swindling bankers and grinding capitalists ; who seek to establish (as in our own country) a monopoly in that land which nature bestowed in common to all her children ? Why have so many of your cities, towns, railroads, canals, and manufactories, become the monopolized property of those ' who toil not, neither do they spin ' ?—while you, who raised them by your labours, are still in the position of begging leave to erect others, and to establish for them similar monopolies ? Tell us also, we pray you—for you have the privilege of investigating the whole machinery of government—why the industrious pursuits of the millions are subject to be suspended, and the homes of happiness of to-day converted into those of misery on the morrow, through the instrumentality of numerous bits of paper which the cunning few have dignified with the name of money ?

" Whence also the opinionative distinctions which prevail in your schools or colleges ? or why has sectarianism its undue influence among a people whose institutions are established on an equality of political and social rights ? Why has education partaken more of party views and class-contracted interests, than in the desire of training up a great nation, physically, morally, and intellectually, to progress onwards in holy brotherhood, to the attainment of all the physical and mental enjoyments destined for humanity ?

" With no disposition either to question your political sincerity, impugn your morality, or to upbraid you for vices you did not originate, it is with feelings of regret, brethren, that we deem it is even needed to enquire of men who for more than half a century have had the power of government in their hands, why the last and blackest

remnant of kingly dominion has not been uprooted from republican America ?

" Why, when she has afforded a home and an asylum for the destitute and oppressed among all nations, should oppression in her own land be legalized, and bondage tolerated ? Did nature, when she cast her sunshine o'er the earth, and adapted her children to its influence, intend that her varied tints of skin should be the criterion of liberty ? And shall men, whose illustrious ancestors proclaimed mankind to be brothers of nature, make an exception to degrade to the condition of slaves, human beings a shade darker than themselves ?

" Surely it cannot be for the interests of the Working Classes that these prejudices should be fostered—this degrading traffic be maintained. No ! no ! it must be for those who shrink from honest industry, and who would equally sacrifice, to their love of gain and mischievous ambition, the happiness of either *black* or *white*. We entertain the opinion, friends, that those who seek to consign you to unremitting toil, to fraudulently monopolize your lands, to cheat you in the legislature, to swell your territory by injustice, and to keep you ignorant and divided, are the same persons who are the perpetuators and advocates of slavery.

" That they are rich and powerful, we judge from their corrupting influence ; for, with few honest exceptions, that surest guarantee of liberty, *the Press*, is diverted to their purpose and subject to their power, instead of performing its sacred office in developing truth, and in extirpating the errors of mankind—and shame to their sacred calling, there are *preachers* and *teachers*, and *learned men* among you, who plead eloquently against the foibles of the poor, but shrink from exposing vice in high stations—nay, *who are even the owners of slaves, and the abettors and advocates of slavery !*

" That wealth and title should command a preponderating influence where the power of government is alone vested in men of wealth (as in our own country), we can readily imagine ; but that such baneful power and influence

should exist for so long a period *where the franchise is vested in the millions* would be hard to be believed, if we had not been taught that *knowledge is the best auxiliary of political power.*

" We doubt not your general knowledge in the arts, sciences, and literature, commonly taught in your schools—nay, that your country has an advantage over ours, as far as the rudiments of knowledge are taught ; but with all this we greatly doubt your knowledge of the *very principles on which your government is founded.* We judge from your present position and the facts before us, that, with all your general knowledge, you do not understand *the democratic principles* contained in your Charter of Independence to the extent which it becomes you to understand them.

" We have been thus candid in pointing out what we conceive to be the cause of such evils as we find you complaining of, and of others which we think it should be your duty to attend to ; and, in saying this, we are not unmindful of our own degraded condition.

" But, fellow-workmen, we are now desirous of informing you of the steps we have taken to correct our own evils, which may not be altogether unprofitable or ununworthy of your notice. And it will at all times afford us the highest gratification to hear of each progressive step you are making towards that consequence and happiness the producing classes ought always in justice to enjoy.

" Seeing the result of our ignorance and divisions, subjecting us to be the tools of party, the slaves of power, and the victims of our own dissipations and vices, we have resolved *to unite and mutually instruct ourselves ;* and, as a means to that end, we have formed ourselves into Working Men's Associations.

" We seek to generate *a moral stamina in the ranks of the millions,* and accordingly make moral conduct the test of membership ; convinced, as we are, that a drunken, a dissipated, and an immoral people, will never attain to political or social greatness ; that whatever may be the

form of their government, they will be the slaves of their own vices, and, consequently, the fitting slaves of others.

"Feeling satisfied that true liberty, its obligations and duties, are never appreciated by the ignorant, we seek to instruct ourselves and fellows in all that regards our political and social rights. To that end we seek to establish *libraries* of the best and choicest works appertaining to man and society. We seek to promote conversations, discussions, and public meetings among us, and thus not only make the sons of labour acquainted with their rights, but qualify them also to carry their knowledge into practice.

"We seek to make the mothers of our children fit instructors to promote our social and political advancement, by reading to and conversing with them on all subjects we may be acquainted with; and thus, by kindness and affection, to make them our equal companions in knowledge and happiness, and not, as at present, the mere domestic drudges, and ignorant slaves of our passions.

"Such are the means we are pursuing to correct our vices and attain our rights; and we would respectfully urge you to enquire whether similar means might not be more advantageously and extensively employed in your country, and whether they might not tend to place you in a position the better to enjoy the fruits of your democratic institutions. We remain, yours in the cause of human liberty,

"The Members of the
Working Men's Association."

As also one of the objects of our Association was "to promote, by all available means, the education of the rising generation, and the extirpation of those symptoms which tend to future slavery," it was to some extent incumbent upon us to put forth our views on this important subject. For, while a large portion of the hawks and owls of society were seeking to perpetuate that state of mental darkness most favourable to the securing of their prey, another portion, with more cunning, were for admitting a sufficient amount of mental glimmer to cause the multitude to walk quietly and contentedly in the paths

they in their wisdom had prescribed for them. A few, indeed, had talked of education as a means of light, life, liberty, and enjoyment for the whole human family; but these were, of course, *the Utopians of the world;* men who failed to perceive that God had made one portion of mankind to rule and enjoy, and the other to toil for them, and reverentially obey them. When, however, the wide-spread poverty, the drunkenness, vices, and crimes of society were clearly traced to the absence of mental and moral light, and the necessity was shown for some comprehensive means for imparting these blessings to all men, bigotry at once commenced its ravings from every church and conventicle in the kingdom, declaring all light to be impious and godless, unless it were kindled at their particular altars. Thus, from that period to the present, have those so-called "Christians" been able to selfishly thwart or retard every effort in favour of a wise and general system of education; and, better far, that they should continue to do so, and education depend on individual effort, than that *bigotry* under the name of *religion*, should be allowed to mar and stultify the great effort of making education the instrument of *mental freedom* and *national progress*.

The following is the Address which was issued to the working classes on the subject of education in 1837 :—

"Brethren,—At this important era of intellectual enquiry, when the moralist begins to doubt the efficacy of his precepts to counteract the torrent of pernicious example —when the *rigid* deviser of punishments has become sceptical of the efficiency of *his enactments*—and when the speculative philanthropist is urging an enquiry into the merits of *national education*, as the most efficient cure for our national evils; we trust it will not be thought presumptuous if we—a portion of that class most in need of education—should state our ideas on the subject in common with others.

"We are the more induced to do this, as we fear that *class interests in some*, and *unfounded jealousies in others*,

have their pernicious influences to prevent, or mar the unbounded good that the working millions must derive from a wise and just system of education.

"As, however, various honest opinions seem to be about equally divided between *a national* and *an individual system* of instruction, we are desirous of testing both these views by what we conceive to be *first principles*, the best criterion by which to judge all national and important questions.

"We assume then, *as a principle*, that all just governments should seek to prevent the greatest possible evil, and to promote the greatest amount of good. Now, if ignorance can be shown to be the most prolific source of evil, and knowledge the most efficient means of happiness, it is evidently the duty of Government to establish *for all classes* the best possible system of education.

"We further assume, that poverty, inequality, and political injustice, are involved in giving to one portion of society the blessings of education, and leaving the other in ignorance; and, therefore, the working classes, who are in general the victims of this system of oppression and ignorance, have just cause of complaint against *all partial* systems of education.

"Now, the annual catalogues of crimes in this country afford lamentable proofs of the great neglect of public duties. They will stand in the records of the past as black memorials against the boasted civilization and enlightened philanthropy of England, whose Legislators are famed for devising modes of punishing, and in numerous instances for fostering crime, but exhibit, year after year, presumptuous proofs of their great omission *to prevent it*. It will be said of them that they allowed the children of misery to be instructed in vice, and for minor delinquencies subjected them to severity of punishment, which matured and hardened them in crime; that, when callous to consequences, they had gone through all the gradations of wretchedness, from the common prison to the murderer's cell, that their judges gravely doomed them to die, gave them wholesome advice and the hopes of repentance; that

eventually, when the fruits of their neglect and folly were exhibited on the gallows, they gave the public an opportunity of feasting their brutal appetites with the quivering pangs of maddened and injured humanity.

"Apart, then, from those benevolent feelings of our nature, which should urge us to save a human being from destruction under all circumstances—should it not stimulate us, fellow citizens, to prevent those beings from becoming the ignorant and degrading disturbers of our peace, against whom our lives and property are not secure, with all our vigilance and precaution? As parents, too, is it not our especial duty to prevent the evils of vice by the regenerating influence of knowledge, when our children may hourly suffer from pernicious example, and whose eyes and ears, with all our anxiety, we cannot shut against the brutal behaviour and foul language which ignorance engenders? Nay, how many fond parents, who have carefully trained up their offspring free from such contamination, and have sought, by the most judicious education in their power, to fortify them against the evils to which they might hereafter be exposed, have yet been compelled to witness the powerful and seductive vices which the want of intellectual and *moral training* has encouraged and made fashionable in society, blighting all their hopes and desires. There is indeed, scarcely a situation in life, as citizens, fathers, or brothers, where the pressing demands of duty should not awaken us to the dangers and consequences of ignorance, and the necessity of a more useful and extended system of education.

"But, unhappily, though the time has gone by for the selfish and bigoted possessors of wealth to confine the blessings of knowledge wholly within their own narrow circle, and by every despotic artifice to block up each cranny through which intellectual light might break out upon the multitude, yet still, so much of the selfishness of *caste* is exhibited in their fetters on the Press, in their Colleges of restriction and privilege, and in their dress and badge-proclaiming charity schools, as to convince us that they still consider education as their own prerogative,

or *a boon to be sparingly conferred upon the multitude*, instead of a universal instrument for advancing the dignity of man, and for gladdening his existence. Yet the selfishness of those exclusives fails not to react upon themselves; the joint influences of the poverty and ignorance their own folly has produced, fill them with the cares of the present, and dark forebodings of the future. The modicum of mental light they have permitted, or *failed to restrain*, has been sufficient to expose their gross selfishness, but not to generate the spirit of enlightened benevolence and justice.

"Thanks, however, to those latent energies which have stimulated the few to investigation and enquiry, *that light is now diffusing itself* in spite of all the barriers of pride and power, and, we hope, is teaching all classes to perceive the importance, not merely of cultivating the arts of reading and writing, but of all those higher faculties which bountiful Nature has so universally bestowed—not to sleep in ignorance, or be diverted to vice, but, doubtless, to reciprocate and swell the amount of human enjoyment.

"Is it consistent with justice that the knowledge requisite to make a man acquainted with his rights and duties should be purposely withheld from him, and then that he should be upbraided and deprived of his rights *on the plea of his ignorance?* And is it not equally cruel and unjust to suffer human beings to be matured in ignorance and crime, *and then to blame and punish them?*

"Let our rulers ask themselves, when they see our prisons filled with victims, our land covered with paupers, and our streets infested with intemperance and prostitution, how much of those terrible evils are occasioned by ignorance, the consequence of their own neglect?—and how many of their sanguinary laws might have been spared, how many of their Prisons, Bridewells, and Hospitals dispensed with, and how many millions of public and private wealth, arrogantly given and ungraciously received, might not have been better appropriated in diffusing the blessing of education?

"We are certain that enquiry will convince them of the fact; and will lead them to perceive, that *knowledge*, like

the balmy breeze, cheers and refreshes in its progress, but *ignorance*, like the tainted air, scourges with disease as it sweeps onwards in its desolation.

"We trust we have, in some degree, succeeded in showing the great importance of education, and the necessity *of publicly extending it;* not as a charity, BUT AS A RIGHT, a right derivable from society itself. As society implies a union for *mutual benefit*, and consequently to *publicly* provide for the security and proper training of all its members, which if it fails to effect, the bond of social obligation is dissolved, and it degenerates into an unholy compact, selfishly seeking its own advantage, to the prejudice of the excluded.

"Independent of which, *charity*, by diminishing the energies of self-dependence, creates a spirit of hypocrisy and servility all just governments should seek to prevent. We contend, therefore, that it is the duty of the Government to provide the means of educating the whole nation; for as the whole people are benefited by each individual's laudable exertions, so *all* ought to be united in affording the best means of developing the useful powers of *each*.*

"But how, it may be asked, are the means to be pro-

* If additional reasons are needed to prove that education ought to be *free to all our people*, and *free also from religious squabbles*, they are afforded by the contests continually taking place over the miserable abortion of Mr. Foster and his clerical allies. A measure which has intensified religious feuds, and created religious antagonism in almost every village in the kingdom; the ruling sects in each, either trying to prevent the establishing of School Boards, or if established to obtain the mastery in them. It has been a subject of constant dispute, because of *religious teaching*, and has engendered great bitterness among the poorest of our population who, with large families and scanty means, *cannot afford the school fees*, low as they may be. Why, then, should we not have *free schools* for our people, and free also from religious teaching, so that all may labour harmoniously in the great work. The advantages of free, or very cheap education, is seen in America, in Scotland, and other places. This, given to the people of Scotland, has opened up to the poorest of them means of living and thriving in various parts of the world, which the uneducated of Ireland and England do not possess; and this defective state of education we owe to religious conflict, to selfish cliques, and to the want of a wise and just code.

vided ? We may reply, by asking how were the means provided for less worthy purposes ? We remember that twenty millions were paid to compensate the owners of slaves for relinquishing their unjust traffic. That the means were provided for paying extravagant pensions, and for erecting useless palaces for royalty ; and are still found to support an almost interminable list of idlers from year to year. Whence, too, we may enquire, came our means to war against freedom wherever it raised its head, and to assist all the despots in Europe to keep their people in ignorance and slavery ? Were but half the anxiety evinced to train the human race in peace and happiness, as has hitherto been exerted to keep them in subjection to a few despots, abundant means would be afforded for the purpose.

" But though we hold it to be the duty of Government to raise the means of education, by taxation or otherwise ; to see it properly apportioned in the erecting of suitable and sufficient schools, and for superintending them so far as to see the original intention of the people carried into effect, we are decidedly opposed to the placing such immense power and influence in the hands of Government as that of selecting the teachers and superintendents, the books and kinds of instruction, and the whole management of schools in each locality. While we want a uniform and just system of education, we must guard against the influence of irresponsible power and public corruption. We are opposed, therefore, to all concentration of power beyond that which is absolutely necessary to make and execute the laws ; for, independent of its liability to be corrupt, it destroys those local energies, experiments, and improvements so desirable to be fostered for the advancement of knowledge, and prostrates the whole nation before one uniform, and, it may be, a power of, despotism. We perceive the results of this concentration of power and uniformity of system lamentably exemplified in Prussia and other parts of the continent, where the lynx-eyed satellites of power carefully watch over the first indications of intelligence, to turn it to their advantage, and to crush in embryo the buddings of freedom.

" We think, therefore, that the selection of teachers, the choice of books, and the whole management and superintendence of schools in each locality should be confined to a SCHOOL COMMITTEE of twenty or more persons, elected by *universal suffrage* of all the adult population, male and female. And to prevent local prejudices or party feuds from being prejudicial in the choice, the district for selecting the committee should be extended beyond the locality they should be called on to superintend. They should wholly, or in part, be elected annually; should give a public report of their proceedings, and an account of the money received and expended every six months, and be responsible at all times to the majority of their constituents.

" We conceive that the *erection of Schools and Colleges should be at the expense of the nation*, and that the numerous endowments and charitable bequests given for the purposes of education would be justly devoted towards that object, as well as other lucrative branches of public revenue. That the whole application and management of them should be confined to a COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, of twelve persons, selected by Parliament every three years. They should report annually, they should be responsible for all monies received and expended, and for the due fulfilment of all their duties, which duties should be publicly defined to them from time to time by Acts of Parliament.

" We think also that *the whole expenses of conducting and keeping those schools in proper condition* should be provided for by *an annual rate*, to be levied by the School Committees in local districts; these districts to be divided, so as to embrace as nearly as possible an equal number of inhabitants, in order that all localities may share as equally as possible in the expenses and the advantages.

" In order to provide competent and efficient teachers for those schools, NORMAL OR TEACHERS' SCHOOLS should be established in different districts throughout the country, in which gratuitous instruction should be afforded to a competent number of persons, who by their dispositions and abilities were fitting, and might wish, to become teachers. Those schools should be managed and conducted by com-

petent professors of every useful branch of art and science, who should be responsible to the local committees, and to the Committee of Public Instruction for the time being. No teacher should be permitted to teach in any school who had not properly qualified himself in a Normal School, and could produce a certificate to that effect. We think that one of the most essential things to be observed in the education of those teachers, is to qualify them *in the art of simplifying knowledge*, of imparting it with effect, and kindness of disposition. Beyond these, we think there should be four different descriptions of schools :—

" 1st. INFANT SCHOOLS, for children from three to six years old.

" 2nd. PREPARATORY SCHOOLS, for children from six to nine.

" 3rd. HIGH SCHOOLS, for children from nine to twelve.

" 4th. FINISHING SCHOOLS, or COLLEGES, for all above twelve, who might choose to devote their time to acquire all the higher branches of knowledge.

" A sufficient number of all those schools, for both sexes, ought to be judiciously erected, to suit the convenience of each locality. *The general training in all* ought to embrace the harmonious development of the physical, moral, and intellectual powers of each child ; to best preserve him in strength, morality, and intellect, so as to enable him to enjoy his own existence, and to render the greatest amount of benefit to others.

" THE INFANT SCHOOLS should be open *to all* children between the ages of three and six ; *cleanliness and punctual attendance* should be scrupulously insisted upon, as the best means of amalgamating of class distinctions, and preserving the children from corrupting influences. We think the first object of the teachers should be, to place the children in accordance with the laws of their organization. And it is, doubtless, in opposition to those laws, to confine them in close atmospheres, drilled to sit in one posture for hours, and to have their little feelings operated

upon by the fears of the rod, of confinement, and of all the numerous follies at present practised to compel submission. The air and exercise of the playground and garden are the first essentials at this early stage, where their teachers should as carefully watch over them as in the schoolroom, and, when all their faculties are in full activity, infuse those principles of action, justice, and kindness necessary to form their character, which at that age will be more impressive than book instruction. They would be taught a knowledge of *things* as well as of *words*, and have their properties and uses impressed on their senses by the exhibition and explanation of objects. Principles *of morality* should not be merely repeated by rote, but *the why and wherefore* familiarly explained to them. Without dwelling on minute details, such we conceive should be the general outline of Infant Education.

"The next step should be THE PREPARATORY SCHOOLS for children between the ages of six and nine. In these, as in the infant schools, habits of regularity and cleanliness should be enforced. They should, as best fitting to their physical development, have sufficient time for healthful exercise and recreation. They should be carefully taught the *laws of their organization*, and the evils of infringing them—as forming the most important lessons to inculcate temperance in eating and drinking, and in all their physical enjoyments. They should be equally taught the evils that are certain to arise to themselves and society from the infringement of *the moral laws of their nature*. It should be the duty of their teachers familiarly to acquaint them with the *social* and *political* relations that exist between them and their fellow-beings. They should be taught by the most simple explanations and experiments to perceive and discover the use, property, and relationship of every object within their own locality, and learn to express in writing, and in correct language, the ideas they have received. The use and principles of arithmetic should be taught them by the most simple methods. They should be taught to understand the principles and practice of music, a gratification and a solace even in the hut of

poverty. Their imagination should be sedulously cultivated by directing their attention to everything lovely, grand, or stupendous around them ; as affording a wholesome stimulus to greatness of mind, and as powerful antidotes against the grovelling vices so prevalent in society. In fact, the end and object of their teachers should be the equal and judicious development of all their faculties, and not the mere cultivation of the intellect.

"THE HIGH SCHOOLS, as the name implies, should be for the still higher development of all those principles taught in the preparatory schools. In addition to which, the children should be taught a more extensive acquaintance with the topography, resources, pursuits, and habits of the country they live in, and with the physical and natural phenomena of the globe they inhabit. They should be instructed in the principles of Chemistry, and its general application to the arts, trades, and pursuits they might hereafter be engaged in ; also the principles of design, and its general utility in all their avocations. They should possess a general knowledge of Geology and Mineralogy, and their most useful application ; also of Social Science, of Physiology, and the laws of health, and the outlines of such other sciences as may be found useful. With the variation required for male and female, they should be taught the first principles of the most useful trades and occupations, by having workshops, tools, &c., attached to every such school. In addition to which a portion of land, where practicable, should be also attached, on which they should practically be taught a general knowledge of Agriculture and Gardening. In fact, they should here be fully educated to love knowledge and morality for their own sakes, and prepared to go out into active life with sound practical information to direct them, and a moral stamina to withstand its numerous temptations.

"THE COLLEGES, in our opinion, should be gratuitously opened for all those who choose to cultivate the highest branches of knowledge. We think that an intimate acquaintance with all known facts would be a valuable addition to antiquated lore, and greatly superior to the mystical

absurdities at present cultivated more from vanity than for utility. That the acquisition of the living languages should also be preferred to the dead; not that we advocate the neglect of the latter, but in order to promote a more intimate acquaintance with the inhabitants and literature of other countries, and thus help to break down those national prejudices which the tyrants of the world are too prone to take the advantage of in fomenting the evils of war and all its terrific consequences. We think further, that the education at these colleges should comprise a knowledge of all the higher branches of the Mathematics, Chemistry, Geology, Mineralogy, Agriculture, Botany, Architecture (Civil and Naval), Natural Philosophy, the Science of Government, Political Economy, and every other science fitted to the capacity of the scholars.

"In furtherance also of the great object of education, we think those schools, should be open every evening, to enable all *the adult population* who choose to avail themselves of the benefits of mutual instruction, societies, singing, lectures, or any other rational pursuits or amusements, unassociated with the means of intoxication and vice, that they wish to indulge in.

"Such we conceive to be the outline of a system of education necessary to be established for extirpating the ignorance and immorality that prevail, and for training up our people to be politically free, morally honest, and intellectually great.

"On the subject of corporal punishments, it may be necessary for us to express our opinion. We think them highly mischievous at all times, and in every form. They call forth and strengthen the most revengeful propensities in some, and cow the timid minds of others into slavish subjection. Reason may direct the intellect to see impropriety of conduct, and kindness subdue the feelings of anger, but harsh blows and injudicious privations only strengthen a harsh disposition.

"Taking also into account the numerous religious sects and political parties that exist in our country, to many of

whom we are highly indebted for our present mental and moral improvement, we think no particular forms of religion should be taught in the schools. We conceive that no particular doctrine can be safely determined on without just cause of complaint to some who might, notwithstanding, insist upon and urge its great importance when otherwise taught. No particular creed or form of religion can be *justly* adopted; * those who would impose them in the public schools *upon the children of parents of all denominations*, have profited little, we think, from the advice of Him who associated with publicans and sinners, who said he was 'no respecter of persons,' who cautioned his disciples to 'love one another,' and to 'do unto all men as they would that others should do unto them.' Surely when abundant time can be found for imparting religious instruction beyond that dedicated to the purposes of the school, and when so many religious instructors of all denominations can be found most willing to impart their peculiar opinions, it would seem to be more in accordance with those precepts of Christ, mutually to unite in morally educating our children, *to dwell in peace and union*, which are the great essentials of religion, than by our selfish

* Mr. Spurgeon—the popular preacher—in once addressing an audience on the subject of Education, spoke of a wonderful bottle belonging to his grandmother, which had a large apple within it, and which had often excited his childish wonder as to how so large an apple could enter the small neck of the bottle. As he grew older, however, he found out that his grandmother must have put the bottle over the apple when it was very small, so that it grew to its large size within the bottle. Hence he urged the necessity of putting children within the religious bottle when very young, and for rearing them up in the bottle, a course which his audience very generally approved of. But when we have so many kinds of religious bottles in society, into which the proprietors of each all want to cram as many of the young and unreflecting as they can, and to rear them up in their own creed, and their own notions of religion, it would be well to ask Mr. Spurgeon and his disciples how they would like their own children to be crammed into the Catholic bottle, the Church bottle, or any other of their opponents' bottles? As they would doubtlessly object to this, how much better would it be to defer all those kinds of religious notions till the child had acquired strength of mind to judge for itself.

desires and sectarian jealousies, suffer ignorance, vice, and disunion to prevail.

"We submit these views and opinions in the spirit of brotherhood, hoping you will investigate the subject and judge for yourselves."

CHAPTER VII

In the general election, consequent on the death of the King, the Liberal cause sustained a loss, for a season, in the defeat of Messrs. Roebuck, Colonel Thompson, Ewart, and Sharman Crawford. The defeat of the two first was, I believe, occasioned by their freedom of opinion in opposition to some of their sabbatarian constituents ; and of the others by the Whigs and Tories uniting their influence against them. In furtherance of the cause of Radicalism, we deemed it necessary to entertain those friends of the people, by giving them a public dinner at White Conduit House ; at which all the other Radical Members of the House of Commons were invited, and most of them attended ; among others Mr. D. O'Connell, whose invitation, it would seem, gave great offence to Mr. Fergus O'Connor, a gentleman whose subsequent career proved so injurious to the Radical cause. The first time we heard of Mr. Fergus O'Connor in London was, I believe, at a meeting at Cockspur Street Tavern, where he avowed himself a follower and supporter of the great agitator of Ireland ; in fact, he then regarded himself as one of O'Connell's tail. Shortly after this, I have been given to understand, some electioneering matters gave rise to a quarrel between them ; then O'Connor came over to reside in London, and began to attend our Radical meetings. Soon after his quarrel Mr. Hetherington, myself, and some other Radical friends, believing him, at first, to have been unjustly treated by Mr. O'Connell, called a public meeting at Theobald's Road, to express an opinion on the subject. A great number of Mr. O'Connell's friends attended on that occasion, and gave their version of the subject, so that we were all but outvoted on the resolution proposed ; and, although Mr. O'Connor was in the gallery

at the time, he left us to fight his battle as we best could.

In December of this year, the Birmingham Political Union having put forth an admirable address to the Reformers of Great Britain and Ireland in favour of the suffrage, our Association replied to it as follows :—

" Fellow-countrymen,—We have read with delight the noble declaration of principles you have put forth in your address to the reformers. Your determination to firmly contend for those great principles of liberty, Universal Suffrage, the Ballot, and short and certain parliaments, entitle you not only to our cordial approbation and generous confidence, but also of all other similar Associations of Working Men.

" We would merely direct your attention to what we feel satisfied was not an intentional omission in your address, we mean the abolition of Property Qualifications for Members of Parliament ; without which men of wealth must be universally selected, instead of men of honesty and talent.

" On reading your excellent introductory observations, we felt that if there were any just cause for regret, it was that you, the men of Birmingham, who in 1832 stood among the foremost ranks of reformers, who by your daring front drove the Tory minions from power, have so long and patiently been silent with the hypocritical, conniving, and liberty-undermining Whigs—have silently suffered them to pursue their treacheries and persecutions, foreign and domestic ; to equally undermine the freedom of labour, the rights of man, and the liberty of nations.

" We accept, however, with confidence, your honest explanation. You gave them credit for virtues and intentions as remote from Whiggery as honesty of purpose is from Toryism. We cordially join therefore with you, in calling upon our brethren in all parts of the kingdom to make *another enthusiastic effort for freedom ;* to re-organize their Political Unions, and form themselves into Working Men's Associations, in every district, town, and parish in the country ; and never to cease their agitation, nor rest satis-

fied till they have established our representative system upon a just and equitable basis.

"Uniting upon the broad principle of universal right, we shall have the confidence and support of all good men with us. The exclusive few alone, who seek for selfish power and benefits, will stand apart till the diffusion of knowledge shall have taught them correct principles of truth and justice.

"We all think with you, that the cause of England and Ireland is one; and that our representatives are wanting, either in judgment or honesty, who under the plea of '*justice*' to our country, will maintain by their influence persons in office who have declared against the further progress of reform, and consequently of liberty in both.

"*Justice*, therefore, we say equally for Whig and Tory. They are equally opposed to the rights of the people (they differ only in their policy), and every man who is the advocate of those rights ought never to hesitate in driving and keeping both factions from office. Let not the Tories therefore believe that the old game of *ins* and *outs* is continually to be played for their especial advantage. The time has arrived when no set of men can long retain office who refuse to progress with the intelligence of the age, and to accord justice to the millions.

"The absurd notion entertained by the *Court* must yield to the dictates of reason found without its precincts—that there is no necessity for the Tories coming into office, for the want of more efficient persons to fill it than the Whigs.

"With every respect for the judgment of Her Majesty, we think a cabinet could be selected of neither Whig nor Tory principles, yet possessing greater talent than have hitherto been found in the councils of Royalty—men disposed to the carrying forward of such measures of Reform as will give equal political rights and equal means of instruction to all the people, and consequently to afford the only efficient means by which our country shall progress in liberty, knowledge and happiness.

"But in order to enable any set of men to progress in

favour of liberty, against the corrupting influences that exist to oppose it, the people must be united to support them ; and as power has a corrupting influence, the people must carefully watch over and remind them of their duty. If the people will do this, their cause will succeed to the extent of their desires ; but if they are indifferent to their rights, their enemies will enslave and eventually triumph over them. Strong in the hopes that our brethren will respond to your call for union, we remain, &c., &c."

In the commencement of the following year (1838) our Association having heard of still further excesses committed by the officials of Canada, under the sanction and authority of our Whig Government, presented another petition to the House of Commons, praying them to impeach the ministers for high crimes and misdemeanours. This petition was drawn up by Mr. Hetherington, and contained a reiteration of the grievances to which the Canadians were subjected. But as the House of Commons had previously sanctioned the Whigs in their wrongdoings against Canada, our prayer for impeachment was very much like appealing to culprits for a judgment against themselves.

Our Association, about this period, having received a great number of addresses and communications from different bodies, among others from the Polish emigrants, thought it a suitable opportunity for putting forth their views on European politics. These were embodied in the following " Address to the Working Classes of Europe, and especially to the Polish people " :—

" Brethren,—In reply to the Polish Democrats who have recently addressed us, we beg it might be understood, not only by them, but by the working classes of Europe, that while we are zealously labouring to diffuse a knowledge of true principles among our own brethren, we are not unmindful of that great principle of democracy that '*all mankind are brothers*,' And though the perversion of truth and justice has called forth the exclusive feelings of the few, to conspire and rebel against the happiness of

the many; yet, when knowledge shall have expanded the intellect of mankind, they will assuredly perceive that all the nations of the earth have in reality *but one brotherly interest.*

"Possessing this conviction, we feel persuaded that every effort that can be made towards eradicating those national prejudices and bigoted feelings which the selfish and despotic rulers of mankind have implanted and perpetuated for their own advantage, will tend towards that great consummation of national and universal happiness, when equality of rights shall be established, and when '*men shall love one another.*'

"And we know no better means of effecting this righteous object, than by availing ourselves of those great rights and privileges of humanity our countrymen have achieved through persecution and death, and which your oppressors have unjustly deprived you of, or prevented you from obtaining—we mean the right of investigating and enquiring, through the means of *public meetings, open discussions,* and *the press* (stamped and trammelled as it is), which is the most desirable form of government—the best mode of instructing the people—the most economical mode of producing wealth, and the best means of its just distribution—and of causing all the corruptions and anomalies of church, state, and individuals to pass in review before the great tribunal of public opinion, from which all power should emanate, and to which alone it should be responsible.

"True it is that the friends of freedom throughout the continent have just cause to remember with feelings of execration the base conduct of the Government of England, in secretly undermining, or openly opposing every attempt they have made to check the inroads of despotism, or to advance the cause of democracy. But it should be remembered that the same rampant spirit of aristocracy, which, by a corrupt legislative assembly, a hypocritical money-loving priesthood, and a standing army of soldiers, placemen, pensioners, and expectants, keep the working millions in ignorance and subjection, have been, and still

continue to be, *the persecutors of liberty throughout the world*, and not the reflecting portion of the people of England.

" But, brethren, we think we have discovered the great secret of their power : it is *our own ignorance of society and of government—our prejudices, our disunion, and distrust*— and we feel that our enlightenment, union, and confidence will best dissolve this unholy compact of despotism.

" Fellow workmen, have you ever asked yourselves by what powerful spell the productive millions of Europe are held in subjection to a puny insignificant number of human beings ? If you have not, begin now to enquire ; and we think that reflection will convince you, that *the people themselves have raised up and continue to support those few idols of wealth and power, which constitute at once their fear and adoration.* The foolish aspirations after power, the lust of riches, and *the servile fear* diffused throughout society, prepare mankind for *the concentration of their own feelings*, in the power, pomp, and pageantry of a crown.

" Who, instead of questioning the choice, and fitness for office, are the first to bow before the antiquated name of royalty—to admire the splendid show and littleness of folly—to swell the slavish train of flatterers, who by their cringing make and mould the tyrant ?—who but the giddy unreflecting people ?

" By whose labours are the citadels and fortifications of despotism erected, and all the waste and profligacy of courts and camps upheld ?—The people's, who glory in the means which keep them slaves. Where, but from the ranks of labour, have the despots of Europe raised their fighting slaves to keep their brother slaves in awe ? Who, but the people themselves, form the warlike phalanx round their tyrants' thrones, and glory in the privilege to wear their slavish trappings, and at some minion's bidding drench the land with blood ?

" Who, but the people, toil from birth till death, and thousands pine in misery—to support these idle few in all their oppressions and debaucheries, and think it just to do

so ?—nay ! bow before the hireling priest who impiously declares *that God has ordained it !*

" Democrats of Europe—you who aspire to place liberty upon the throne of justice—to establish the laws on the basis of equality—and to awaken the dormant faculties of mind to appreciate the social and political happiness of our race—be assured, that though the power of despotism can check the progress of knowledge, it is *the ignorance of our brethren* which generates and fosters the despot.

" What thousand ineffectual efforts of freedom have been crushed by ignorance ! How many millions of generous hearts, panting for liberty, have been sacrificed by the allied despots of Europe, backed up as they have ever been by the ignorance and fanaticism of the millions ? When young freedom first broke her bonds of servility in France, and proclaimed the eternal rights of humanity, how few of her enthusiastic sons could appreciate the blessing ! When, in noble daring, she stretched forth her hand to emancipate Italy, to enfranchise Germany, and to raise up Switzerland from her political lethargy, what were the powers that paralysed her generosity ? The ignorance and prejudices of the masses, subjecting them to be the slaves of priests and nobles, and blind instruments of the wealth and title-hunting minions of despotism. The ' altar and the throne ' formed the magic spell by which European despots kindled the flame of loyal fanaticism, and the blind confidence reposed in an ambitious chieftain, rivetted anew the chains of kingcraft and priestcraft. The subsequent struggles for freedom have again been fruitless of benefits to those who bled to effect it ; the courageous few who broke the dominion of legitimacy in France, and who sought to establish *equal rights for all*, were constrained by the prejudices of the many in favour of royalty to set up the idol of wealth on the ruins of privilege.

" The strange infatuation and foolish fears which cause the present electors of France to support a soulless tyrant in power, who, despite of oaths and protestations, has sacrificed one by one the liberties of their country, and

now mocks them with his boasted alliances with despots, afford another presumptuous proof that principles are sacrificed by ignorance, or that conviction of mind has not yet engendered determination of purpose to expel such a perfidious tyrant from their soul.

"The brave Belgians, touched by the electric spark excited by the heroes of July, united in subduing one species of despotism to fall the disunited victim of another. Their foreign king, by exciting national prejudices against Dutchmen, by a corrupt press, and a system of German espionage, has succeeded in nullifying their revolution, and in keeping back the tide of political improvement—the work he was set by Whigs and Tories to perform.

"In turning to Poland, the land of Kosciusko, what, let us enquire, was the curse that withered the principles of her ancient liberty, and hastened her downfall? It was the curse of privilege. It was the prejudice of caste, the offspring of ignorance, the source of political and social degradation, that paralysed the enthusiasm of the generous few who sought to free their country. For it should be remembered that the nobility of Poland, by diplomacy, intrigue, and domestic despotism, were the immediate or accelerating cause of her subjugation. Taking advantage of national prejudices, by holding the millions as property inseparable from their soil, they destroyed the only effective energies that could resist the desolating progress of Russian barbarity.

"When the news of her recent struggle called forth the sympathy of every friend to freedom, what was the reason assistance was withheld them? The people of France had foolishly prostrated their liberties before their Citizen King—the prototype of Nicholas himself. The English, charmed with their sailor idol and his "*reforming ministry*," lauded and admired their *pacific policy!*—like their successors, very pacific when despotism is crushing the liberties of a country, but vigorous and warlike when liberty has the chances in her favour, as their present policy in Canada testifies. The Russian tyrant, thus secure, and openly encouraged by the despots of the Continent, recklessly

pursued his victim; not a voice was raised to cheer, nor an arm to defend her; Poland was eventually conquered, her sons have been persecuted and scattered through the earth, and her daughters have become the reward of her ferocious spoilers. Heaven grant that her children may gather such seeds of democracy in their exile as, at no distant period, may be planted in their cherished country to produce fruits of national freedom and enlightened brotherhood.

"Passing onward to the German and other despotic states, what, let us ask, has generated their iron system of injustice? Why are all the powers of each state—the laws, revenues, church, education, and the press—all vested in one man? Evidently because of the ignorance of the multitude! *An enlightened people would never submit to despotism.* Whence came their soldiers, spies, and informers, but from the ranks of the people? and who would consent to be such miscreant tools of despotism but the morally depraved and mentally ignorant?

"It has been the enlightened few in all countries, whose generous efforts to improve their species have been frustrated through the cowardice or servility of the masses; and who have been made to bleed on the scaffold, to pine in the dungeon, or to become wanderers through the world.

"Need we revert to Hanover, where the prejudice in favour of hereditary sway has enabled a Tory chieftain to set aside constitutional rights, and to play the tyrant with impunity. And shame to the servility of that country, the conscientious professors of Gottingen have been banished at his royal mandate, because they would not break their oaths to enslave their country. Think you, if the intelligence and courage found among the professors and students of that city pervaded the multitude, that such infamous tyranny would escape the justice it so highly merits?

"In Italy, where liberty has stamped immortality on her very ruins, where every step recalls the greatness of the past to mock the littleness of the present, the multitude—slaves to priest or prince—are insensible to the lesson. The ardent few who, brooding over their illustrious fore-

fathers, catch the inspirations of freedom, are, by the supineness of treachery of their brethren, made the victims of Austria, or of the petty princes who are the jackals of his power. YOUNG ITALY, like the young in all countries, where knowledge has enlightened the understanding, is virtuously resolved in favour of liberty; but the old sins of ignorance, prejudice, and fanaticism, diffused among the masses, form a drag-chain to their progress, a barrier to their freedom.

"Throughout the Continent the efforts of democracy have ever been checked and blighted by the same retarding curse. The Greeks shook off the yoke of Turkey; the despots of Europe united to give them a child to rule them, and England the means to uphold his despotism. The Spanish democrats rose against the union of priests and nobles, and proclaimed the Constitution of 1812, and abolished that retarding curse of just legislation, a privileged House of Nobles. Our rulers and yours, through the ignorance of the multitude, intrigued and re-established it. Under the plea of fighting against bigotry and absolutism, our rulers sent their bands of ignorant soldiers, to enable another set of plunderers, worse even than the former, to keep back the progress of freedom. And, by their well-organized system of falsehood, too successfully imposed the belief on popular credulity. But the republican insurrections at Cadiz, and all the principal towns, in favour of the Constitution of 1812 (*which was suppressed by English soldiers and sailors*), give the lie to those who contend that they were sent there to fight in favour of freedom.

"Similar demonstrations in favour of liberty have been crushed in Portugal, and that by similar means; proving that, though the despots of the world may quarrel for territory or plunder, they are cordially united to keep the people in subjection.

"Fellow producers of wealth! seeing that our oppressors are thus united, *why should not we, too, have our bond of brotherhood and holy alliance?* Seeing that they are powerful through your ignorance, why should not we unite *to teach our brethren a knowledge of their rights and duties?*

Perceiving that their power is derived from our ranks, why should not we unite in holy zeal to show the injustice of war, the cruelty of despotism, and the misery it entails upon our species ?

" Be assured, brother Democrats, that the success of our principles, and the consequent happiness of mankind, will best depend *on our union and knowledge*. We must not rely on the mere excitation of the multitude to condemn bad men or measures, or to change one despot for another —we must labour to diffuse such political, social, and moral information among them, as shall enable them to found their institutions on principles of equality, truth, and justice.

" And what man can look around him, and witness the governments that any ways approximate to those principles of liberty, and contrast the comfort and happiness of the inhabitants, with those founded on exclusive power and privilege, without being prepossessed in their favour ?

" Those of the cantons of Switzerland, where universal suffrage is established, where trades, manufactures, and agriculture are greatly combined—in spite of foreign intrigues and persecutions—are blessed with intelligence and happiness in proportion as they are free. The Republic of America, cursed as it is with slavery and the remnants of royal dominion, is a beacon to freedom : and even the inhospitable shores of Norway bear witness in favour of democracy.

" Let us, therefore, brethren, cultivate feelings of *fraternity among nations, and brotherly union in our respective countries*. Let us not be so ignorant as to allow ourselves to be converted into soldiers, police, or any other of the infamous tools by which despotism is upheld, and our brethren enslaved. Let us be prepared to make any sacrifice in the dissemination of truth, and to cultivate feelings of toleration between Jew, Catholic, Protestant, or Dissenter. Let us respect the conscientious belief and opinions of each other ; knowing how much depends on the education we receive, the books we read, the conversations we hear, and the government we live under. Let us

leave persecution for opinions to despots, and resolve that henceforth it shall not be found in the ranks of labour.

"The organs of government, at this moment, are endeavouring to weaken our sympathies, by exciting our prejudice against the French Canadians. The party who seek to keep Ireland in subjection, seek to excite our feelings against Catholicism from the same motives; therefore let us be assured, friends, that all those *are the enemies of the people* who seek to oppose the great Christian precept of 'love and charity.'

"With the view of generating enquiry among the masses, and stimulating the few to renewed exertions, we have stated what we conscientiously believe are the great obstacles to human liberty. But let not our enemies believe that we think our brethren less competent to exercise their political rights than those who now possess them. No! *we regard the franchise as the best of schoolmasters*, and we point to the intelligence of America and Switzerland as proofs of the correctness of our opinions."

In 1837 a furious attack was made upon the trade unions of the kingdom by Mr. O'Connell and a large portion of the master manufacturers, aided by a portion of the press devoted to their interests. It had its origin in a *strike* made by the journeymen cotton-spinners of Glasgow against a reduction of wages proposed by their employers. During this strike a person of the name of Smith was shot in the public street, which was at once charged upon the cotton-spinners, and a number of them were arrested and put upon their trial. The indictment and evidence against them (forming two folio volumes) embraced charges of conspiracy, fire-raising, and murder, extending backwards over a period of twenty-five years. The principal charges against them, however, could not be proved; but on one charge, that of conspiring together *to intimidate a person from working*, they were sentenced to transportation for seven years. The horrible charges trumped up against these men were re-echoed through the press, as the acts and deeds of *trade unions in general*, and no language was

thought too severe to be used against them. This attack induced the trade associations of Glasgow to appoint a deputation to come up to London to lay the case of the cotton-spinners before the public, as well as for petitioning Parliament to institute a fair enquiry regarding the charges made against them. Mr. Daniel O'Connell, however, having previously joined in the attack made upon trade unions, opposed the enquiry, unless the investigation extended also to the Dublin trades. This the Government agreed to, and the enquiry was made general; a Select Parliamentary Committee having been appointed in February, 1838, to enquire into the operation of the Combination Act, and the Constitution and Proceedings of Trade Unions in general. The trade unions of the kingdom, while they were fully prepared for any investigation into their proceedings, could not but feel indignant in being charged with the acts of individuals committed before many of them were born; as was the case on the cotton-spinners' trial. They, therefore, viewed the parliamentary enquiry as an attempt to establish some plea for repealing the Combination Act, and for thus crushing, if possible, all union among working men. This feeling caused the majority of trades in town and country to make every arrangement for securing, if possible, a fair investigation by the Parliamentary Committee. A General Committee was accordingly appointed by the trades of London; local committees were appointed in other towns; a Parliamentary Agent was engaged; and I was so far honoured by their confidence as to be chosen their Secretary.

It was on the eve of this enquiry that Fergus O'Connor sought to prejudice public opinion against our Working Men's Association, in attributing the enquiry to us. The charge was made in a letter to John Fraser, of Edinburgh, the Secretary of the Edinburgh Radical Association; in which he said "the first step in this deadly course was taken by the Working Men's Association of London." The following letter in reply to him will best convey what part we took in the affair, as well as our opinion of that gentleman at this early period of his history :—

"Sir,—In the *Northern Star* of last week, you were pleased to make an unprovoked attack upon our Association. Alluding to the appeals that had been made to the House of Commons on behalf of the unfortunate cotton spinners, you said that 'the first step in this deadly course was taken by the Working Men's Association.' And then you proceed to say that you attended our meeting to point out the fallacy of our proceeding—and it would seem, because we did not yield to your dictation, we have grievously offended. Sir, we are exceedingly obliged for your unusual bit of candour in thus speaking out the venom of your spleen; your language has hitherto been cautiously enigmatical, abounding in inuendoes, wishing by the hackneyed terms of 'Whig Malthusian,' 'Working Class Coadjutors,' and such like epithets to convey a slanderous meaning, your courage never till now embodied in plainer language. Now it so happens that *you do not speak truth* when you say that the first step in this 'deadly course' (which you are pleased to call it) was taken by us, for the Committee of Trade Delegates were the first to petition Parliament on the subject, and their motives in that step were doubtless as pure as our own—that of endeavouring to remit the sentence of the unfortunate men. Indeed, the odious colours in which the press depicted the proceedings of Glasgow; the horrid recital of oaths, secrecy, murdering and fire-raising—said to have been committed by the Cotton Spinners' Association—had created in many of our minds (as we have no doubt it had in those of thousands) a strong impression of their guilt, until the trade delegates from Glasgow had fully explained to us the whole of those horrid charges which were gleaned together over a period of twenty years and upwards, to suit the purposes of the prosecutors. And we appeal to Messrs. McNish, Cuthburtson and Campbell, whether they were not urgent in their desire that the whole affair should be fully investigated in order to prove the innocence of the men, and to remove the foul calumnies which a corrupt press had fastened on the Cotton Spinners' Association; and through them to a great extent on trades' unions in

general. The feelings, which conscious innocence inspires, caused them to court the fullest inquiry into their affair, and we appeal to every reflecting mind whether we were wrong in seconding their praiseworthy exertions. But, sir, it is your evident intention to impress the working classes with the belief that the enquiry into trades' unions in general originated with us. So far from this, we appointed a deputation on the 9th of January last to wait on Mr. O'Connell whenever he came to town, to know his reasons and intentions regarding the enquiry he had threatened to make several weeks previous, so that we might be prepared to meet any evil arising from a partial enquiry in a House of Commons constituted like the present. Indeed, as most of us are members of trades' unions, we have the motives of self-preservation to be tremulously alive to every circumstance that may in any way injure or impair the usefulness of trade societies. But when the black charges of conspiracy and murder are made against a trade society, and when the lives of five men are jeopardized by prejudiced public feelings, we think it little serves the purpose of justice or humanity to shrink, or advise shrinking, from that investigation which would serve to dispel the one, and save the other from destruction. Sir, you might have beaten the big drum of your own vanity till you grew sick of its music, and revelled in your own selfish idolatry till common sense taught your audience that the sacrifice was greater than the benefit, had you been pleased to excuse us from worshipping at your altar. But no, your own vain self must be supreme—you must be 'the leader of the people'—and from the first moment that we resolved to form an association of working men, and called upon them to manage their own affairs, *and dispense with leadership of every description;* we have had *you* and *patriots of your feelings* continually in arms against us. You have made three or four attempts to get up associations in London where you might be 'the leader'—not brooking that working men should dare presume *to think of principles* instead of public idols. You have failed in all your attempts. You have christened

public meetings 'great associations' to suit your purposes —you have dubbed yourself 'the missionary of all the Radicals of London,' your constituents being your own presumptuous boastings. You 'are the founder of Radical Associations!' Heaven save our ignorance! or blot out the memory of Cartwright, Hunt and Cobbett. You tell the country that you alone 'have organized the Radicals of London'—and tell the Londoners the wonders your genius has performed in the country. You carry your fame about with you on all occasions to sink all other topics in the shade—you are the great 'I AM' of politics, the great personification of Radicalism—Fergus O'Connor. Could self-idolatory do more, without blushing, than you did in your paper last week? The mechanics of London, met to hear the statements of the Glasgow delegates—their eloquent and pathetic tale at once annihilated the prejudices formed by a corrupt press. You intruded yourself on that meeting in opposition to a resolution that none but members of trade societies should speak. In your *expressly made report*, your sympathy to the cotton spinners gave about a dozen lines of what all others had said, and about three columns of your own speech, whole sentences in which, by-the-bye, you had not the courage to speak, though you had the vanity to insert them in your paper. We beg to remind you that these sentiments have been called forth by your slanderous attack on us; you would have it believed, to our prejudice, that we have been neglectful of the interests of working men, because we choose another path from yours. But time will show, and circumstances soon determine, who are their real friends; whether they are 'the leaders of the people' who make furious appeals to their passions, threatening with fire and sword, or those who seek to unite them upon principles of knowledge and temperance, and the management of their own affairs."

O'Connor published a shuffling reply to this in the *Northern Star*, which concluded with a threat, that "we must either crush him, or he would annihilate our associa-

tion" ; a threat which evinced the spirit of the man, who, after he had made a false charge, threatened us with annihilation for complaining.

To detail our labours in the "Trade Combination Committee" would form a lengthened story ; suffice it to say that we commenced our proceedings with an "Address to the Working Classes, in reply to the attacks made upon Trade Unions" ; that we opened up a correspondence with most of the trade associations in the three kingdoms, and got them to send up competent persons to be examined before "The Select Committee," to rebut the charges made against them. Unfortunately, Mr. Wakley and Mr. Hindley, the persons on the committee on whom we chiefly relied to examine our witnesses, were taken ill soon after the examination commenced, which gave our opponents a great advantage over us, for Mr. O'Connell was the masters' exclusive advocate, and our bitter opponent, supplying them *secretly* with the evidence given. Several witnesses were examined regarding the cotton trade and some of the Dublin trades, and, although both masters and men were proved to have been guilty of many foolish and unjustifiable acts, the horrible charges previously made against trade associations were not substantiated. The evidence was printed, but no report made ; a Commentary on and an analysis of which was drawn up by myself and subsequently published by our committee, entitled "Combinations Defended."

CHAPTER VIII

It has been stated, in a previous chapter, that no sooner was the committee appointed for the drawing up of the Bill (since designated the People's Charter), than a dissolution of Parliament took place, and they could not be called together again until the new Parliament was elected, and the members came again to town. On their being again assembled at the British Coffee House, they resolved on making the prayer of the petition, agreed to at the Crown and Anchor, the basis of the bill, and appointed Mr. Roebuck and myself to draw it up. We agreed to divide the work into two parts, but unfortunately the Canadian Revolution taking place, and Mr. Roebuck being interested so much in that event, he being their advocate, had no time to attend to the drawing up of the bill. I was therefore urged, both by him and our own members, to do what I could myself towards the completion of the whole. Having my bread to earn, and but little time at my disposal, it necessarily took me some time. In the meantime, the Radicals in different parts of the country began to be impatient respecting it, they having read of the appointment of the committee in our "Address to the Electors." When I had finished my work, I took it to Mr. Roebuck, who, when he had read it, suggested that I should show it to Mr. Francis Place, of Brompton, for his opinion, he having taken a great interest in our association from its commencement. I may here observe that my intimate acquaintance with this clear-headed and warm-hearted old gentleman arose out of a public controversy between us regarding the state and condition of the working classes; several of our letters on the subject may be found in Mr. Hetherington's Twopenny *Dispatch*. The copy of the bill I had prepared, together with that of

the petition, I accordingly took down to Mr. Place for his perusal. In a day or two he sent them back again, accompanied with suggestions for arranging the provisions of the bill under different heads, instead of running on in the usual form of acts of parliament, together with other valuable hints. This idea being approved by Mr. Roebuck, necessitated my rewriting the whole over again, in order to arrange the different provisions under their respective heads, as "Arrangement for Registration," "Electoral Districts," &c. When the bill was so prepared, a meeting of the committee of twelve was called at the office of the Combination Committee, Bridge Street, Westminster, to submit it for their opinion. The bill having been read, Mr. O'Connell suggested a new preamble to it, the one prepared having set forth several reasons for the enactment of the measure. He dictated one which he thought would suit the purpose, but that not being approved of by the committee they requested Mr. Roebuck to prepare one against the next meeting. He did so, and that which he wrote now forms the preamble or first three paragraphs of the bill. They then went through the various clauses, and after some trifling amendments it was ordered to be submitted to the Working Men's Association previous to its being printed. The bill was then discussed, clause by clause, by the members of that association, and after some slight alterations was ordered to be printed and sent to all the Working Men's Associations and Radical Associations of the kingdom for their opinions respecting it. Among the few suggestions thus made for its improvement was one by Mr. Hume, at the Radical Club, respecting the mode of placing names on the register, which was adopted. Another suggestion adopted was made by a Scotch Association (the name I have forgotten), for substituting the registration clerk for the parish clerk, they having no such parochial officer as the latter in many parts of Scotland. These alterations rendered it necessary that I should rewrite the whole again previous to its being submitted to the general public. By the request of the committee, I also drew up the following address to be appended to it :—

"Fellow-countrymen,—Having frequently stated our reasons for zealously espousing the great principles of reform, we have now endeavoured to set them forth practically. We need not reiterate the facts and unrefuted arguments which have so often been stated and urged in their support. Suffice it to say, that we hold it to be an axiom in politics, that *self-government, by representation, is the only just foundation of political power*—the only true basis of Constitutional Rights—the only legitimate parent of good laws;—and we hold it as an indubitable truth that all government which is based on any other foundation, has a perpetual tendency to degenerate into anarchy or despotism; or to beget class and wealth idolatry on the one hand, or poverty or misery on the other.

"While, however, we contend for the principle of self-government, we admit that laws will only be just in proportion as the people are enlightened; on this, socially and politically, the happiness of all must depend; but, as self-interest, unaccompanied by virtue, ever seeks its own exclusive benefit, so will the exclusive and privileged classes of society ever seek to perpetuate their power and to proscribe the enlightenment of the people. Hence we are induced to believe that the enlightenment of all will sooner emanate from the exercise of political power by all the people, than by their continuing to trust to the selfish government of the few.

"A strong conviction of these truths, coupled as that conviction is with the belief that most of our political and social evils can be traced to *corrupt* and *exclusive legislation*, and that the remedy will be found in extending to the people at large the exercise of those rights now monopolised by a few, has induced us to make some exertions towards embodying our principles in the following Charter.

"We are the more inclined to take some practicable step in favour of Reform, from the frequent disappointments the cause has experienced. We have heard eloquent effusions in favour of political equality from the hustings, and the senate-house, suddenly change into prudent reasonings on property and privileges, at the winning smile

of the minister. We have seen depicted in glowing language bright patriotic promises of the future, which have left impressions on us more lasting than the perfidy or apostasy of the writers. We have seen one zealous Reformer after another desert us, as his party was triumphant or his interests served. We have perceived the tone of those whom we have held as champions of our cause lowered to the accommodation of selfish electors, or restrained by the slavish fear of losing their seats. We have therefore resolved to test the sincerity of the remainder by proposing that something shall be done in favour of the principles they profess to admire.

"In June last we called a general meeting of our members, and invited to attend that meeting all those Members of Parliament who by their speeches and writings we were induced to believe were advocates of Universal Suffrage. Several did attend, and after some discussion another meeting was proposed, at which several Members of Parliament pledged themselves by resolutions, signed by their own hands, '*that they would bring in and support a Bill for Universal Suffrage, Equal Representation, Short Parliaments, the Ballot, &c.*' They also passed another resolution at that meeting, *appointing persons to draw up such Bill.*

"Many circumstances have transpired to cause the great delay that has taken place in the doing of this, but the following outline of an Act of Parliament is the result of our deliberations. It has often been urged that Universal Suffrage, as well as all the other essentials to the free exercise of that right, '*could not be reduced to practice.*' This is therefore an attempt to show to the contrary; and we think it would be practically found to be a simpler, cheaper, and better mode of securing to the whole people their elective rights, than the present expensive machinery by which the rich and ambitious few are enabled to pauperize and enslave the industrious many.

"Although this may be a new form of putting forward our claims, they are in themselves by no means new. In former times Parliaments were only *sessional*, and the

Members received *pay* for their attendance. In 1780 the Duke of Richmond introduced a Bill in the House of Lords for the purpose of establishing *Annual Parliaments*, and for giving the right of voting *to every man not contaminated by crime, nor incapacitated for want of reason.* Three years after this, in his celebrated letter to Colonel Sharman, he says, 'The subject of Parliamentary Reform is that which of all others most deserves the attention of the public, as I conceive it would include every other advantage which a nation can wish; and I have no hesitation in saying, that from every consideration which I have been able to give this great question, that for many years has occupied my mind, and from every day's experience to the present hour, I am more and more convinced that the *restoring* the right of voting to every man universally who is not incapacitated by nature for want of reason, or by law for the commission of crimes, together with annual elections, is the only Reform that can be effectual and permanent.' In 1780, the electors of Westminster in public meeting appointed a committee, out of which a sub-committee was appointed to take into consideration the election of Members of Parliament. Charles James Fox, the leader of the Whigs, and Thomas Brand Hollis, Esq., were the chairmen of these committees. In their report to the electors they recommended Annual Parliaments, Universal Suffrage, equal Voting Districts, no Property Qualifications, Voting by Ballot, and Payment of Members.

"*The Society of Friends of the People* was established in 1792, by Charles Grey, Esq. (now Earl Grey), the Hon. Thomas Erskine, Mr. (afterwards Sir James) Mackintosh, several noblemen and Members of the House of Commons. In 1795 they resolved to publish a Declaration in which the right of voting should be so moderate that there should be no condition in life in which it might not be acquired by labour, by industry, or talents.

"These are the doings of the Whigs of former times, persons whose speeches *on every other subject* our modern Whigs quote with ancestral reverence as texts from holy

writ. Like every other irresponsible body, they have, however, degenerated. The only remedy for the evil is to render Whig, Tory, and Radical legislators alike *responsible to the people*, and to instruct the people in a knowledge of their rights and duties.

"And we could wish it to be engraven on the memory of every Reformer, 'that the people must be free, in proportion as they will it,' not by foolishly lending themselves to bigotry or party, to become the instruments of the conceited or selfishly ambitious, as they have too often done, nor by *violently* overthrowing the empire of title, the folly of privilege, or the domination of wealth; for the experience of the past has clearly written for our guidance that a change of men is not always a reformation in principle, and when a knowledge of their rights and duties shall have taught the people *that their own vices and ignorance are the chief instruments by which they are bowed to the dust*, titles, privileges, and wealth will lose their potency to enslave them.

"Fellow-countrymen,—The object we contemplate in the drawing up of this Bill is to cause the Radicals of the kingdom to form, if possible, a concentration of their principles in a practical form, upon which they could be brought to unite, and to which they might point, *as a Charter they are determined to obtain.*

"We intend that copies of it shall be forwarded to all the Working Men's Associations and to all Reform Associations in the kingdom to which we can have access, and we hereby call upon them, in the spirit of brotherhood, to examine, suggest, and improve upon it, until it is so perfected as to meet, as far as possible, with general approbation. When it is so far improved, and has received their sanction, we intend that it shall be presented to Parliament, and we trust that petitions will not be wanting to show how far we are united in demanding its enactment. We hope, also, that electors and non-electors will continue to make it the pledge of their candidates; will seek to extend its circulation; talk over its principles; and resolve that, as public opinion forced the Whig Re-

form Bill, so in like manner shall this Bill eventually become the law of England.

"In drawing it up we have found some difficulty in fixing the requisite qualification of electors, because of many of the barbarous and unjust laws which corrupt and selfish legislators have enacted. While, for instance, we agree with most reformers that felony should lead to the deprivation of political rights, we think the law which makes it felony for a boy to steal an apple, or to kill a wild animal which crosses his path, is as cruel as it is unjust.*

"We think, also, that the present alien laws, which had their origin in the bigoted and prejudiced feelings of other days, should be so modified as to permit the right of citizenship to those who, for some definite period, have taken up their abode among us, and are willing to declare their allegiance as citizens, and thus break down those barriers which kingcraft and priestcraft have erected to divide man from his brother man. But we deemed it far better to lay down just principles, and look forward to the rational improvement of those laws, than to make exceptions to injure the character of the measure we wish to make as perfect as possible.

"In conclusion, we think that no unprejudiced man can reflect on the present unjust and exclusive state of the franchise, where property (however unjustly acquired) is possessed of rights that knowledge the most extensive, and conduct the most exemplary, fail to attain; can witness the demoralizing influence of wealth in the Legislature; and the bribery, perjury, tumults, and disorders attendant on the present mode of elections, but must admit that the object contemplated is worthy of the task we have imposed upon ourselves, however we may have fallen short in providing an efficient remedy."

I have deemed it necessary to give this brief history of

* I may here state that the first draft of the Bill, afterwards called the People's Charter, made provision for the suffrage of women, but as several members thought its adoption in the Bill might retard the suffrage of men, it was unfortunately left out.

the origin of the People's Charter,* a document that has excited, among the industrious classes, a more extended and united public opinion in its favour, than perhaps any other political document that has issued from the press. Among the good resulting from its publication is the extensive public opinion it has served to create among the millions in favour of an equal, just, and efficient measure or represesentative reform.

Previous to its publication the principle of *universal suffrage* was sneered at by the enemies of reform, as an Utopian and impracticable theory. Among reformers of our representative system we had the greatest diversity of opinions regarding what was just and necessary to prevent the House of Commons from being the ready tool and lackey of the Lords, and every variety of organization was found among them according to the conflicting notions they entertained. Some of them were organized and contending for the ballot, some for short parliaments, some for extending suffrage—some for household and some for universal—and the enemies of all reform laughed at their numerous diversified theories, and their opposing and wasted efforts. But the details of the Charter brought home to the minds of the many the justice, the practicability, and the efficiency of the measure. They at once saw in it a plan calculated to give *all classes their legitimate share in the government of their country*, instead of the corrupt and privileged few, who for so many years have bowed down the energies of our country and almost withered its hopes. In less than twelve months from the date of its publication upwards of a million of people had declared in its favour, and it was going on rapidly enlisting new converts and earnest supporters, when a few mad advisers, by furious appeals to the passions of the multitude, stirred up the demons of hate, prejudice, and discord, to obstruct its onward progress. The result is too well known ; their violence and folly scared back our friends, and placed the desired weapons in the hands of our enemies. They brought persecution, suffering, and death into our

* See a copy of it in the Appendix B.

ranks, severed our links of union, cast a gloom across our hopes, and gave the exclusive and privileged classes hopes for believing that Chartism was dead and securely entombed. But, great as are their rejoicings and their triumphs, those persons may yet live to perceive that so much vitality was buried with it, as to enable it to burst its cerements, and that though its body now sleeps its spirit is abroad watching the men and awaiting the hour—that it is yet destined to have a glorious resurrection, unmarked by violence and untarnished by folly—an uprising that shall inspire all classes who love justice to hail it as the hopeful regenerator of their country.

The People's Charter was published on the 8th of May, 1838. The first public meeting it was submitted to was one held at Glasgow on the 21st of May, when Mr. Thomas Attwood and the Council of the Birmingham Union visited Scotland; the persons we appointed to submit it to the men of Glasgow being Mr. Thomas Murphy and Dr. Wade. It very rapidly received the approval of numerous Associations in different parts of the country, and on the 6th of August, by the men of Birmingham at one of the largest public meetings ever held in that town, our Association having previously agreed to make their National Petition *the first petition for the Charter*. It was our waiting for this large meeting to take place that delayed our submitting it to a public meeting in London till the 17th of September following its publication. And here I may state that so favourable were the opinions entertained of our Working Men's Association by a large portion of the Middle Classes, that we were enabled to make a requisition to the High Bailiff, signed by a number of the most influential men of Westminster, for calling our first public meeting for the People's Charter in Palace Yard. Our missionaries also were well received by a large number of the Middle Classes in the different towns they visited; and no inconsiderable portion of the Press republished our Addresses, and advocated our views. In fact, we were fast gathering up the favourable opinion of the Middle, as well as of the Working Classes, when

the violent ravings about physical force, by O'Connor, Stephens, and Oastler, scared them from our ranks ; they, doubtlessly conceiving that they had better put up with known evils, than trust to an unknown remedy purposed to be effected by such desperate means. It was not, however, till near the time of our Meeting in Palace Yard, that our Working Men's Association began to be mixed up with this violence ; it having been for the most part confined to the demonstrations in the North *against the new Poor Law*, in which Stephens, Oastler, and O'Connor were the principal speakers. In fact, the People's Charter was published and circulated throughout the country some time before it was even noticed in O'Connor's paper ; * nor was it till after its adoption by the Birmingham Council that he followed public opinion in its favour.

Another circumstance tending to create bad feelings, disunion, and distrust between the Middle and Working Classes on the eve of this Meeting, was the proposed re-agitation against the Corn Laws. The proposal being made at this particular juncture, coupled as it was with the following advice, given in a popular Middle Class news-

* This was the *Northern Star*.—The following account of its origin is taken from a series of articles written by Mr. Robert Lowery, one of our convention, and published in the *Temperance Weekly Record*. "Fergus, having lost his seat for Cork, and quarrelled with Daniel O'Connell, left the Irish agitation, and appeared at the Meetings of the English Radicals. He went down into the factory districts, and, speaking to please, soon became popular. J. Hobson, Mr. Hill, and others in Yorkshire, seeing the want of a newspaper, as an organ for the rising movement, had succeeded in raising some few hundreds of pounds, by shares, to establish one. O'Connor persuaded them that they would not be able to get the necessary amount, and that the mixed authority of a committee would hamper the Editor, and render the paper inefficient. He proposed that the shareholders should lend him the money raised, for which he would guarantee interest, and that he would find the rest of the capital, and commence the paper at once ; and that Hobson should be the publisher and Hill the editor. This was done, and the paper entitled the *Northern Star*. But there is every reason to believe that at that time he had no capital, and that the money of the shareholders was the only money ever invested in the paper. Fortunately for him it soon rose to a very large circulation, reaching at last to some 60,000 a week."

paper,* naturally excited the belief of the Working Classes that the object aimed at was not so much the repeal of those unjust laws, as it was *to frustrate their agitation in favour of political reform.* "All those who want to stave off as long as possible the trial of strength between the proprietary and the working classes ought to direct the meeting that is to be held in Palace Yard, to pass resolutions for the repeal of the Corn Laws, and to move an amendment to the People's Charter." The keynote having been thus struck other journals took it up, and at once Chartism became with them the especial object of denunciation, and the Corn Law agitation the measure to be exalted. It was these attacks that caused us to put forth the following address to the people of England, in reply to the objections of the Press :—

"Fellow-countrymen,—Having great faith in the inherent excellence of humanity, and believing that more of the mental and moral incongruities of men are to be attributed to erroneous convictions than to interested perversions of truth and justice, we should belie our opinions were we to make any foolish attack on the press or its conductors.

"We rather lament that such a powerful instrument towards man's political and social redemption should be constrained by interest or party, to shut out truth from its pages and make error a marketable speculation ; or that men, so competent to direct aright the public mind, should be employed to mystify and mislead it.

"But we think that the many notorious changes and conversions recently witnessed, the skilful balancing of opinions, the fear-to-offend and desire-to-please disposition which have characterized so great a portion of those papers who call themselves '*liberal*,' should open the eyes of all those who desire to see the Press as consistent in practice, as it ought to be honest in principle.

"Such eccentric courses, and such conduct, in men professing liberality of sentiment and honesty of intention,

* It was *The Sun* newspaper.

can only be countenanced by the public's disregard of all principle, or the private encouragement of those who maintain their fraudulent position by unworthy means.

" We would be the last to restrict the freedom of thought, or the most unbounded expressions that could be given in opposition to our own opinions, as we consider that truth can only be elicited through the severest test of mental conflict; but when, in the same paper, we see the most ultra-political principles set forth in the strongest language to-day, pertinaciously defended by the most cogent arguments to-morrow, and the most sweeping condemnation and invective bestowed on them the day following, we confess we do not think it free discussion, but direct apostasy.

" We are induced to put forth these observations from the conduct of a great portion of the press, ever since the recent agitation that has commenced in favour of the ' People's Charter and the National Petition,' embracing, as they do, the principles of Universal Suffrage, as well as the other essentials which we believe necessary to a just representative system. Without, however, *individualizing* any paper, or noticing their scurrility or abuse, we will proceed to answer some of the objections they have urged against us, or our principles.

" They say that we are ' adopting and imitating the mischievous conduct of our oppressors, in seeking to make men free and happy by means of legislation.' What, we would ask, but legislation has made the difference between democratic America, despotic Russia, and pauperised and oppressed England? If the will of the American people, expressed through their legislature, has raised them from such a poor and heterogeneous origin, to become a nation ' better educated than any other under the sun— where two-thirds of the adults are proprietors, and while most of the others have the prospect of becoming so '— what, we would ask the gentlemen who make those admissions, is there in the character of Englishmen to prevent them from realizing similar advantages, were the

same political rights conferred on them as on their American brethren ?

" They say that our ' *ignorance and poverty* should preclude us from the franchise.' We beg to refer them back to the ' beautiful democracy ' and all its results, which they admit to exist in America, and ask them whether the intelligence and prosperity of that country *preceded* their political rights, or whether they are not the consequence of their having obtained them ?

" Granting that a number of our countrymen are in poverty, can these gentlemen show, by any valid reasoning, the absolute necessity of their being so, especially in a country blessed by nature with such abundant resources ? Nay, can they trace the existence of that poverty to any other source than corrupt and exclusive legislation ? Granting too, that ignorance to a great extent prevails, to what other cause can it be attributed than to those who have legislated to keep knowledge from the people ? And, therefore, is it not as immoral as it is unjust to make the *effects* of corruption a pretence for upholding the *cause* of it ? We would call upon any reflecting individual to take up the history of his country, and to investigate the true cause of all the wars, the superstitions, the oppressions, and the persecutions, which leave so many stains upon our national character, and he will find it to be an exclusive and corrupt government ; and he will find that in proportion as the spirit of democracy has forced its influence on the legislature, so have the venomous influences of later times abated.

" Warned, therefore, by the experience of the past, and cheered by the example of modern democracy, whether in Switzerland, Norway, or America, we think that every lover of his species ought to exert his influence to remove that prolific source of evil—*corrupt legislation*. It is not so much by *forms* of government that evils are generated or removed, as by the principles of exclusive or responsible representation ; the former acts for itself, the latter for the people. Therefore, according to our humble abilities, in seeking to remedy the evils we complain of, we

believe the most effective means will be those we have embodied in the People's Charter.

"We are told that 'Universal Suffrage would produce universal confusion'; that 'the people would only substitute noisy demagogues for an idle aristocracy,' and that therefore 'we had better suffer the ills we know, than fly to others that we know not of.' Those who talk of present ills, we presume, are not among the suffering classes, and they only expose their own selfishness and heartlessness in showing such a disregard to the misery of others. As to the kind of men we should choose, if Universal Suffrage prevailed, that will need experience to test it; but where it has been tested by the descendants of Englishmen, such 'demagogues' as Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, and others equally efficient, seem to cast a doubt upon the prophecy. The 'confusion,' too, likely to flow from removing corruption would, by the same test, be proved more imaginative than real. America had an adventurous and speculative race to begin with, intermingled with fanatics and convicts from Britain, and for the last half century the poor and oppressed of all the countries of Europe have sought and found an asylum on her hospitable shores. The greedy speculator, the ruined bankrupt, the broken down insolvent, and the felon pursued by justice, have also transferred their vices to her soil, but her salutary laws and institutions, *springing from Universal Suffrage*, have enabled her to reform, instruct, and purify the mass, and in despite of that black *remnant of kingly dominion*—'SLAVERY,' she is the most prosperous and free of all the nations of the earth.

"We have been gravely assured that 'the best test of intelligence is property'—that 'the outward mark of ascertaining the existence of property is house-rent'—that 'a still surer indication of property is direct taxation,' and 'that therefore the present electoral body is a guarantee for fair legislation.' While we, in part, admit the truth of some of these propositions, to the extent that wealth will *give the means* of knowledge, we deny that property is any fair criterion for intelligence. We know of hundreds of rich

fools, and thousands of housekeepers whose knowledge does not extend beyond their counters, and who are no more qualified to judge of any man's political capabilities than the most ignorant ploughman, whose common sense would not at least be subject to such influence as the fear of losing a wealthy customer. If *wealth alone* formed 'a sufficient guarantee for just government,' the benevolent portion of mankind would not for so many years have been striving to rescue the enslaved negro from the mercenary grasp of the wealthy planter of India, and the Southern slaveowner of America; nay, further, if *intelligence alone* were sufficient, we should not have such a catalogue of bad laws to complain of.

"The great boast of England is 'Trial by Jury'—but why do we prefer the less intelligent jury to the more intelligent judge, who fully knows the law, and is a more competent judge of evidence? Simply, *because honesty is not always united with intelligence.* We have found out that wealthy and intelligent judges cannot even be trusted in a court of law, and we are therefore pleased to submit to the occasional blunders of an unbiassed jury, rather than trust our lives to a designing judge. If men without responsibility were strictly virtuous, a few intelligent individuals would be found sufficient to make and execute the laws; but as they are not so, we must endeavour to make them honest by making them accountable and responsible for their actions.

"But we are told that 'we are virtually represented'—that 'our interests are identified with those who represent us.' This is very false philosophy. Man does not always pursue *his own* real interests; if he did, he would never commit so many crimes and blunders as he does; on the contrary, he pursues an imaginary interest, as passion or circumstances determine; and hence the necessity for laws to regulate his conduct. So with men collectively, so with classes—they uphold the interest of their class according to their power or inclinations; and it is only by a mutual reliance on, and *responsibility to each other*, that oppression can be guarded against.

"Land, labour, and capital are the great sources of wealth; without land and labour capital would be unproductive; without capital and land labour could not be employed; and, without labour, both land and capital would be useless. Here, then, is a mutual necessity for mutual interests; and, being so dependent, each upon the other, justice demands that in all the arrangements necessary for production and distribution, equality in legislation should prevail. But, no; we are told that 'the capitalists dread the labourers, and therefore will oppose giving them their rights.' We would here stop to ask these very consistent gentlemen, who talk of 'virtual representation,' what just cause have English capitalists to dread, or to oppose the English labourer, more than American capitalists have to fear the power of Universal Suffrage in that country. The people there find it to their interest to protect and encourage capital as *the best seed for future production*,—they find it equally beneficial to remove monopolies and develop their own resources, taking care that, as the public cause is promoted, individual interests shall not suffer. They know that *knowledge* is the surest promoter of peace and order, and therefore seek to extend it,—they find that poverty is the most fruitful source of crime, and therefore seek to remove it. Do the opponents of Universal Suffrage imagine that Englishmen would be less wise in pursuing their own interests than Americans are?

"But there are a class of reasoners who, when foiled by truth and compelled to admit the justice of principles, will fall back upon that old subterfuge of error, *expediency*. We are told that, admitting Universal Suffrage to be just, 'we must demonstrate its expediency.' In answer to which we would say, if the evils of which most classes complain, can be traced to any one cause, it is as *expedient* as it is just to remove that cause. And if we can show that the removal of a similar cause has produced beneficial results in another country, it is 'expedient' to make the trial in our own. We are next informed that 'Household Suffrage would be a more respectable suffrage' than that

which we propose; in reply to which, we think honesty preferable to respectability, and believe that all the ignorance which they say they fear would be embodied in Household Suffrage, *to the exclusion of the intelligence of the towns*, would be embodied in Universal Suffrage.

"But, as a last resource, the opponents to our rights think it necessary to mislead and misdirect us from our object. They tell us that 'the repeal of the Corn Laws is of much more importance than the Suffrage,' as it would even give cheap bread, more trade, promote morality, upset the priesthood, and destroy cant.' That the Corn Laws are highly mischievous we admit, but they are only *one of the effects* of the great cause we are seeking to remove; and in justice we think the question of their repeal ought to be argued *by the representatives of all the people*, and not by a faction. If they had existed so long that people had forgotten the state of things previous to their enactment, we might be induced to have faith in all the blessed promises now made us; but the year 1815 is not of very great antiquity. And when we find the following bit of advice given by these 'kindly disposed persons,' we think it exhibits their hollowness and hypocrisy. 'All those who want *to stave off* as long as possible the trial of strength between the proprietary and the working classes, ought to direct the meeting, that is to be held in Palace Yard, to pass resolutions for the repeal of the Corn Laws and to move an amendment to the People's Charter.' This is evidently an attempt to sow divisions and dissensions, in no ways warranted by the disposition of a patient, long-suffering, industrious people; nor by any supposed interest in opposition to persons or to property. But we would caution such advisers against making such 'trials of strength,' and warn them also against exciting prejudices it should be their duty to dispel. In arousing the passions they silence reason, and the weapon they would enlist in their service might be fatal to themselves."

CHAPTER IX

The Great Birmingham Meeting on the 6th of August might be said to be the first *Chartist meeting* at which O'Connor introduced his physical force notions, or rather his Irish braggadocio about arming and fighting, for to fight himself formed no part of his patriotism; for when his mad folly subsequently incited violent commotion among "his dear children," he shrank from personal consequences and slunk over to Ireland. His speech, at the meeting referred to, about "fleshing swords to the hilt," having furnished our opponents with a daily text, and a keen weapon with which to assail us, made us anxious to prevent if possible a like exhibition at our Palace Yard meeting. Therefore in our instructions to the speakers appointed by our Association we requested them "to keep as closely as possible to the two great questions of the meeting—*the Charter* and *the Petition*—and as far as possible to avoid all extraneous matter or party politics, as well as every abusive or violent expression which may tend to injure our glorious cause." But though our own members and most of the country delegates avoided everything likely to give a handle to the enemy, O'Connor and Richardson (one of his disciples) marred the moral effect of our meeting by their physical force swagger. At this meeting the People's Charter and the National Petition were adopted, and eight persons appointed to form part of the *convention* that were to meet in London in February following, "to watch over the presentation of the petition, and to obtain, by all legal and constitutional means, the enactment of the People's Charter." The numbers attending our meeting were variously estimated; suffice to say, that we obtained at and during the meeting 16,000 signatures to the National Petition, and that eighty-nine towns sent delegates to attend it.

In the evening after our meeting the delegates assembled at the rooms of our Working Men's Association in Gray's Inn Road, and agreed to resolutions empowering us to prepare an address to the Irish people, the same to be sent round to all the Working Men's and Radical Associations of the kingdom to obtain their concurrence and a signature on behalf of each. This measure was the more necessary at this juncture as Mr. O'Connell was endeavouring to persuade the Irish people that the English Radicals were their especial enemies ; and although he had been a party to the drawing up of the People's Charter, and had otherwise given us his signature pledging himself to support it, he had become so suddenly influenced by a little Whig patronage as to turn round and denounce English Radicalism, and the Chartists in particular, with the most virulent abuse, threats, and bitterness. Our address when drawn up was sent round and signed on behalf of *one hundred and thirty-six Working Men's and Radical Associations*, and was then forwarded to all the associations in Ireland we could get access to, and among them to the Precursor Society, recently established by Mr. O'Connell. The following is the Address :—

" Brothers in Political Bondage,—The deep waters which divide our shores, and the still deeper intrigues of self interest and bigotry which in ten thousand channels have laboured to divide our hearts, have led to the formation of prejudices opposed to our mutual interests. Those mischievous feelings have been carefully fostered by the interested exclusives of both countries. They have employed you to silence our demands for freedom, and we have been engaged to keep your country in poverty and subjection. Prejudice and ignorance have ever been the great allies of despotism, and well do our rulers know it ; union and knowledge are the twin brothers which shall destroy its dominion, and it is for us to let our brethren know it ; on that knowledge will our liberty depend, and on the establishment of that liberty our happiness.

" In addressing you, fellow countrymen, our object is

union; for though the channel divides, the ocean surrounds us—though bigotry would dissever, charity should unite us—and as the blood of both countries commingles in our veins, and the people of both blend their occupation in the workshop and the field, so, assuredly, under the benign influence of free and equal institutions would our liberties and interests be blended and identified as one united and happy people.

"We can readily imagine that the oppression and injustice you have received through the legislature of Britain have aroused your feelings and deeply rooted your suspicions against our country. But we would urge you to remember that we, too, have shared in the injustice; we have been reciprocally taxed to oppress, and drilled to enslave each other; and we are still united victims of the same curse which plunders, oppresses, and blights the happiness of both countries—*the curse of exclusive legislation.* This we feel convinced is the great source of our oppression; ignorance, immorality, poverty and crime have their origin directly or indirectly in exclusive legislation; for as long as exclusive interests are made the basis of law and government, so long will exclusive measures be supported at the sacrifice of peace, happiness, and virtue.

"Therefore it is to this one point especially we would direct your attention; nay, we would urge you to enquire whether you cannot trace the numerous evils you complain of to this baneful origin. Who but your own *exclusive legislators* sold your country? And who but the *exclusive legislators* of England profited by the blood-cemented bargain? Your own legislators, corrupted by the gold, and cankered by the patronage of Britain, rendered your domestic legislature a mere puppet of its will;—there it was where landed supremacy predominated, and English interests swayed, till eventually, perfidy concluded the bargain your own corrupt legislature had begun.

"Since the Union—who have been greater instruments, in the hands of Britain, for binding you to the dust than your own exclusive legislators? With few exceptions, the

interest of their own order has been paramount to the welfare of the nation. Grattan, your greatest orator, who in civil war opposed coercive measures, when in the United Parliament, supported the very measures he condemned; and his specious example seems not to have been forgotten by the legislators of modern times. The ruling few of Britain have not been deficient in that selfish sagacity which ever seeks to strengthen injustice by corruption; hence they have united in their unholy compact your most talented orators, profound writers, gallant warriors, and able statesmen—they have inspired your vanity with songs and boastings, and have thrown a halo of glory over the sepulchre of your decay.

"Captivated by power and riches, at the expense of justice, your gentry have been rendered greedy by patronage; your yeomen corrupted by preferment; and the choicest of your peasantry moulded into instruments of oppression, to exact by steel and bludgeon, the scanty necessities of the poor, to support the extravagancies of the rich.

"We will not harrow up your feelings in depicting the horrible results of this system, by dwelling on the extremes of wretchedness with which you are familiar, but we would urge you to trust to your own judgment, apart from the captivating tone of eloquence which has so often been your guide—and to ask yourselves whether these evils are wholly attributable to your union with England; and whether they are to be remedied merely by a separation? We are far from denying your right to a domestic parliament, or the justice of self government; but depend upon it, friends, *while an exclusive class have the election of the House of Commons, the interest of that class will be supported to your prejudice and ours, whether Parliament meet in London or in Dublin.* The separation of that house would only be a division of evils; your own aristocracy would be strengthened, and one faction would supply the place of another. English influence and intrigue would again predominate, and the evil so far from being remedied would be increased in magnitude and power.

Yet this is the chief blessing that is *threatened* to be conferred upon you, if you will not be content with the less measure of happiness our most gracious ministers are disposed to bestow if they were 'free from Tory influences' to dispense their liberal favours!!! The question of extending the suffrage to the millions we never hear of among the blessings to be derived from a separation. You have been assured that your commerce would flourish, and your people be prosperous if you had a Parliament of your own. We believe not, till you have some choice in the electing of it; then indeed when you have legislators whose interests shall be identified with your happiness, will they legislate to effect it, but be assured, not till then.

"The happiness of a country does not depend on her commerce, so much as on the quantity of comforts she can retain for her population. Your commerce has been increasing ever since the Union, and your poverty in a like proportion; to what causes is this anomaly to be attributed? We will presume to express our conviction of the causes for your consideration.

"In the *first* place, exclusive legislators, having their own interests to secure, rather than the general happiness of society, have, by their corrupt enactments, ruinous wars, extravagant expenditure, taxation and monopoly, generated great poverty amongst the people.

"*Secondly*, where poverty exists, there will ignorance and violence exist also; and hence those funds, which ought to be employed in production, have been diverted to the supporting of soldiers, police, prisons, and all those instruments for punishing, what ought in wisd m to have been prevented.

"*Thirdly*, when violence and insecurity exist in a country, coupled with the extractions of fraud, monopoly, and injustice, *capital* will not be secure, and will not be employed there.

"*Fourthly*, for want of those employments capital and wealth would create, nearly the whole population are compelled to have re ourse to agriculture; thus the con-

sequent competition for land has forced up nominal rents beyond the power of payment; joined to which, the rapacity of tithe-proctors, collectors, and bailiffs, have further paralysed the hand of industry, and prevented those improvements the owner and cultivator might otherwise enjoy.

"*Fifthly*, the people thus reduced to live on the lowest description of food, their standard of comforts being almost confined to a sufficiency of it—being the worst housed, fed, and clothed of any people in Europe—there is no demand for these trades and manufactures which generate and support a respectable middle-class population; excepting perhaps in some few exporting towns.

"*Sixthly*, the long series of injustice, insults, and neglect to which your peasantry in particular have been exposed, have generated that state of poverty and wretchedness among them, which is gradually undermining the comforts of the class above them, and bids fair to involve all in the same common ruin; for as their numbers increase they force themselves upon the towns, and by their low standard of comforts, are the main instruments for bringing down all others to their own miserable condition.

"*Seventhly*, faction has been arrayed against faction, creed against creed, and man against his brother man, not so much from their own conscientious opinions, as from the pernicious counsel and malignant influences of corrupt legislators, who find their own selfish supremacy strengthened by the divisions and dissensions of the multitude.

"If you agree with us, brethren, as to the origin of those evils, we trust you will co-operate with us to effect a remedy, and the only effectual one, we believe, will be that which Mr. O'Connell has sworn to and pledged himself to support, 'Universal Suffrage,' as well as other essentials to the free exercise of that right. In all countries where the people are exercising the right of freemen, they are progressing in knowledge and happiness; wherever class legislation prevails, the interests of the millions are despised and neglected. True liberty cannot exist where man does not exercise the rights of man; for men whose

lives and liberties are dependent on others—who are taxed at others' wills—must fight at others' biddings—must pay others before they can write, talk, buy or sell—must toil or starve at the will of others—though they may sing of freedom, are still but the slaves of others.

"But you have been told that you must first and foremost be placed on 'an equality with England,' you must have 'municipal reform,' and 'the franchise equal to that of England.' We fear these counter projects are only intended to baffle the Radicals of England, and create a diversion in favour of the present *patronizing ministry*. We can give you the benefit of our experience as regards these enviable measures of reform. We have men in our municipal corporations who at one time were the greatest advocates of reform; they have now realized all the reform they wished for, and therefore are the greatest opponents of further progress. Those, too, whose energies were united with the millions to obtain the Reform Bill, are now as energetically opposed to the rights of their former allies. Do you think the same class in Ireland will be more grateful in extending, or less powerful in opposing, any further reform or extension of right than those of England? If so, you may, like us, find another agitation to be necessary, and need more efficient co-operators to render it productive of benefit, than those who now call upon you for your aid.

"We readily admit the great injustice of compelling the Catholics of Ireland to support a Protestant Church Establishment, and cannot but lament the crooked policy which has prevented the settlement of that question. But lest you may think this a singular injustice, we would take this opportunity of informing you that there are a greater number of persons in England compelled to support a Church from whose doctrines they dissent, than in your own country—nay, there are thousands of conscientious Protestants themselves, who believe that the sanctity of their Church is tainted by its corrupt alliance with the State.

"But you are called upon to get up an exclusive agita-

tion founded on the measures we have referred to ; measures as fruitless and as profitless to the bulk of the people, as they are meant to be mere barriers to secure Whiggery, and stumbling-blocks in the way of Radicalism. We shall doubtless be condemned as 'Tory Radicals,' in cautioning you against this maudlin delusive scheme ; but be assured, you have swallowed more bitterness to retain the present ministry in power, than the united despotism of Whig and Tory could administer, if the friends of the people were justly allied. You are cautioned against us, because we 'are neither combined nor concentrated,' 'nor have skilful or well-tried leaders,' and 'talk of using physical force and the shedding of human blood.'

"Regarding the extent of our combination we will not boast, but are desirous that you should judge of it from the hundreds of thousands who, for the first time, have given up their own projects of reform, and are now pledged and united in favour of the People's Charter and the National Petition.

"We have not, neither do we desire, *leaders*, as we believe that the principles we advocate have been retarded. injured, or betrayed *by leadership*, more than by the open hostility of opponents. Leadership too often generates confiding bigotry or political indifference on the one hand, and selfish ambition on the other. The principles we advocate are those of the people's happiness, and to be justly established each man must know and feel his rights and duties ; he must be prepared to guard the one, and perform with cheerfulness the other ; and if nature has given to one man superior faculties to express or execute the general wish, he only performs his duty at the mandate of his brethren ; he is 'the leader' of none, but the equal of all.

"Regarding the other assertion, that we 'have talked of physical force,' which comes with a mock reproach from him who has so often boasted of physical force. We are not going to affirm that we have been altogether guiltless of impropriety of language, for when the eye dwells on extremest poverty trampled on by severe oppression, the

heart often forces a language from the tongue which sober reflection would redeem, and sound judgment condemn. But we deny that we are influenced by any other feelings than a desire to see our institutions peaceably and orderly based upon principles of justice. We believe that a Parliament composed of the wise and good of all classes, would devise means of improving the condition of the millions, without injury to the just interests of the few. We feel that unjust interests have been fostered under an unjust system, that it would be equally unjust to remove without due precaution ; and, when due, individual indemnification. We are as desirous as the most scrupulous Conservative of protecting all that is good, wise, and just in our institutions, and to hold as sacred and secure the domain of the rich equally with the cottage of the poor.

" But we repeat that we seek to effect our object in peace, with no other force than that of argument or persuasion ; and we call upon you, as we do upon the wise and good of every class, to unite with us in our most holy compact, the ultimate object of which is the freedom and happiness of Britain, and, through her example, that of the world.

" We call upon you to unite with us to cause the principles of the People's Charter to become the law of these realms, believing it to be a just and necessary measure to ensure equal and just legislation. We have been too long engaged in trifles and expediencies. Millions of our fellow men rise up in poverty and perish in crime, whilst mock philanthropy, too regardless of the present, give promises of hope to future generations.

" But, fellow countrymen, while we are desirous of your aid we shall not despair without it ; our cause is strong in proportion as it is just, and our numbers will swell in proportion as our enemies oppose us. Our National Petition may be indignantly spurned ; our charter at first may have but few supporters, but our second petition will swell in numbers at the injustice ; our energies shall be redoubled at each division that may be made against us ; our third shall embody the numerical power and mental energy of the kingdom, whose determination to have ' justice '

will increase with each refusal, till their irresistible resolution can no longer be controlled by all that power and wealth can purchase.

"These, brethren, are our views, our objects, and our determination. To carry them forward we implore the co-operation of rich and poor, male and female, the sober, the reflecting, and the industrious; we can spare the drunkard from our ranks till reflection shall have made him a more worthy member of society; and, strong in the right and justice of our cause, we invoke the blessing of success."

CHAPTER X

This Address of ours, which was well received by a large portion of the public press, by Sharman Crawford, and other patriotic Irishmen, was replied to by Mr. O'Connell, on behalf of the *Precursors*. It was intitled, "The Reply of the Precursor Society, on behalf of the People of Ireland, to the Address of the persons styling themselves the Radical Reformers of England, Scotland, and Wales." In this reply he deplored our ignorance of the Irish people; contrasted the conduct of Whigs and Tories; charged us with the want of sympathy for the sufferings of his countrymen, and with want of candour in disclaiming leadership; and concluded with charging upon us the physical force doctrine of O'Connor, Stephens, and Oastler. The following was put forth in answer to it:—

"The Working Men's Association to the Irish People, in Reply to an Address on their behalf by Persons styling themselves the Precursors.

"Fellow Countrymen,—The object of the Radical address to you, signed on behalf of a hundred and thirty-six associations, was to show you, notwithstanding Mr. O'Connell's assertion to the contrary, that there were men among us cordially disposed to unite with you to render you 'justice,' as there were others resolved to unite to keep you in the reins of Whiggery *for their own especial advantage*, careless of the beggary and wretchedness of the millions. And we also, in thus addressing you, are no less anxious to secure your co-operation towards effecting one of the greatest objects men can perform on earth to be acceptable to heaven; that of improving those institutions which, according to their purity or corruption, render a nation enlightened, prosperous, and happy, or ignorant, poor and degraded.

"It would appear, however, from the persons who style themselves 'the Precursors,' and who have taken upon themselves to write for all Ireland, that whatever hopes or sentiments animate the great bulk of your countrymen, there are persons among you who do not desire union with men whose objects are 'justice for all classes.' And if we could bring ourselves to believe that these persons represented the national mind of Ireland, and that that mind was so steeped in the opiate of Whiggery as to lay its thoughts and feelings prostrate before one man—though that man's talents were as transcendant as *their* gratitude has been unbounded—we should rather be disposed to despair for her fate than entertain bright hopes of her regeneration.

"The document we refer to is an echo of the Whig press of England—what it fails to answer it does not scruple to pervert. It taunts us with wanting candour, and accuses us of falsehood, and yet itself is made up of the very essentials it condemns. It is, however, what it was intended to be, *a Whig apple of discord;* not only to prevent union between the English and Irish Radicals, but, if possible, to divide those already united. It begins by upbraiding us for not having denounced certain individuals for their expressions of violence. In reply to which we beg to inform you that our great object has been to honestly pursue principles rather than to denounce men; we have left abuse to those who are better masters of the art. And even were we so disposed, we could not except that great reprover of his age, Mr. O'Connell himself, who, when denouncing others for impropriety of language, talks of petitioning with 'a million and a half of men of *fighting age.*"

"From the origin of our Association we have ever discountenanced violence—we have ever declared that the moral power of the people would be the most effective weapon to combat the enemies of freedom, and similar opinions were expressed in the address we sent you. Yet for all these declarations, our character has been belied and our motives impugned, because individuals have been found to attend our meetings who, like Mr. O'Connell, have ap-

pealed to the passions rather than to the intellect of men. No man has made stronger appeals to the lower feelings of an assembly than the chairman of the Precursors; his 'bloody and brutal' sentiments, his pre-eminently abusive expressions, and fighting threats, have been more loudly applauded by his select audiences than have similar expressions been by the poor weavers of the north. No persons can more sincerely regret than we do the improprieties of language and threats of violence persons, professing the sacred name of Reformers, have recently indulged in; they have only afforded delight to the enemy, and engendered doubts and recriminations among friends. We are of opinion that whatever is gained in England by force, by force must be sustained; but whatever springs from knowledge and justice will sustain itself. Therefore it is that in our aspirations of freedom we seek to build up her temple *in peace*—to raise up a social and political edifice founded on national enlightenment and justice—a temple in which all classes might freely worship without tax, tribute, or reproach; in which all might unite to devise wisely and execute justly, and where the energies of all should be directed to the solving that great political problem, yet unsolved by any nation—*how shall all the resources of our country, mentally, morally, and physically, be made to produce the greatest happiness for all its members?*

"We confess that our imagination sickens at any prospect of civil discord, even if oppressors only were to be the victims, and therefore earnestly trust that the edifice we are seeking to rear may never be established upon a foundation of blood, to be cursed by widowed mothers and undermined by the fatherless. But we must confess we greatly doubt the sincerity of those who, while deprecating violence, are continually boasting of the physical force of 'eight millions,' and threatening that 'Ireland alone would afford sufficient force to crush a revolution in England,' and that they '*are as ready to go to battle as any people in the world.*'

"But we are wisely informed by the Precursors that the words 'universal suffrage' have no magic in them. We

thank them for this information; but inasmuch as they are words used by all *honest Radicals* to express the extent of the suffrage they desire, defined also, as these words have been, to mean the right of voting to all males above twenty-one, of sane mind, untainted by crime, we think it more honest and straightforward for all (*especially those who have sworn and pledged themselves to universal suffrage*) to retain the well-understood term rather than to adopt the less ingenious Whig phrase of 'the greatest possible extension of the suffrage that can practically be obtained.'

"The extent of the suffrage which 'can practically be obtained' will depend on the honesty and perseverance of reformers. If they shall ever be induced to give up any portion of their principles to secure any unworthy object or fraudulent position—to gain power, place, or patronage—they will most certainly be induced to make still further sacrifice of principle *to retain what they have gained;* and thus from their miserable position principle after principle must be abandoned, till those who began as practical reformers turn out practical apostates.

"Persons wishing to impose upon the public words without definite meaning, as well as those who are not disposed to adopt Radical principles, may have some excuse in coining language to express their desires; but surely the chairman, at least, of the Precursors has not this excuse, for setting aside his public avowals of having been *sworn* to universal suffrage, *we have his signature attached to a resolution of his own proposing*, pledging himself '*to support and vote for a Bill to be brought into the House of Commons, embodying the principles of universal suffrage, equal representation, free selection of representatives without reference to property, the ballot, and short Parliaments of fixed duration.*' Nay more, *he was one of the committee for drawing up that Bill, and the Bill that emanated from that committee was the People's Charter.* To that great bond of 'justice' we mean to keep him; we shall demand his support and vote for it in the forthcoming session, agreeably to the pledge he has given and the part he has taken; his differing from

its details will not be taken as an excuse, but will rather be attributed to his neglect of duty.

"It would appear that the gentlemen of the Precursors persist in adopting the same unmanly policy towards us as the Whig and Tory press. Finding they could not justly oppose our principles nor answer our arguments—finding that our public appeals in favour of temperance, knowledge, social improvement, and political right, were bringing around our standard good men of all classes, creeds, and opinions, they have endeavoured to enlist public opinion against us by identifying us with the sentiments and opinions of others. 'The Oastlers, Stephens's, and O'Connors,' are charged as being 'our leaders,' notwithstanding we have repeatedly disclaimed leadership of every description. Now, what can be more apparent than the wilful perversion of truth, which repeatedly identifies Mr. Oastler in particular with our proceedings; he has often publicly avowed himself as an 'Ultra Tory,' and to our knowledge has never attended one meeting in favour of our Charter. And Mr. Stephens is more known for his opposition to the new Poor Law than for his advocacy of Radicalism; he has ridiculed our principles and publicly declared his want of confidence in us. But still, as far as either of these gentlemen has sympathized with the infant factory children, and for the poor and oppressed in their respective districts, they are entitled to our honest praise; but as far as their violent language and mischievous advice to violence have been expressed, we deprecate their conduct. And as far as Mr. O'Connor and others have deviated from a just course and followed their example, we equally disapprove of theirs; because we think with that honest patriot, Mr. Sharman Crawford, that '*when the application of physical force* is held forth as *the moving power* for attaining the reform of our institutions, the aggregation of the *moral power*, which can alone render physical force either justifiable or effective, is destroyed.' But in thus disapproving of the language which Mr. Fergus O'Connor has frequently indulged in, we are no ways inclined to gratify the usefulness of that gentleman, still

less to gratify the enemy by dividing the Radicals of North and South. We verily believe Mr. O'Connor to be sincere in his desire to promote the cause of reform, and it is because we think such language highly mischievous to it, that we thus honestly express our opinion.*

" We are told by the Precursors 'that no popular party can possibly be without leaders, that those who do the business are necessarily leaders.' Now let us not be misunderstood—we understand by leadership, the implicit reliance and obedience of any body of men to one man's will—the foolish belief that he of necessity knows more and can do better, under all circumstances for the whole body, than could be done if they deliberated and acted according to the knowledge and judgment of the whole. Now the experience of the past has taught us, that whenever a person is thus elevated *as a leader* he becomes the principal, and generally the vulnerable object of attack. If he can be influenced through his vanity or his avarice, the blind reliance of his followers renders them the secure victims of the enemy. Do you for a moment suppose, that if the vast number of intelligent minds which do honour to your country, had been free from the domination of leadership, and for the last four years were united to devise the best means of politically and socially benefiting your country, that you would have been led for that time in the quagmire of Whiggery for fear of the bugbear of Toryism? That you would be loyally shouting your gratitude because Mr. O'Connell has some *insecure* portion of patronage, and is consequently enabled to drag along with him a train of expectants, who hail him as the idol of to-day, but would as readily bow before other idols to-morrow?

" We are accused of 'wanting candour' for condemning equally the two factions of Whig and Tory, and that 'our injustice to the Whigs demonstrates our want of sympathy to Ireland.' We must, however, again confess, that the

* This passage was amended from my original draft, for the purpose of maintaining union; I doubted his sincerity then, and have had abundant proofs since.

long catalogue of Whig perfections which the Precursors doubtlessly prepared to move our sympathy, has not effected its purpose. We think, however, that their *superior candour* should have caused them to have added Catholic emancipation to the list, which the Tories are said to have given to Ireland; but, as we think of the Whigs on the questions of the Reform Bill and Negro Slavery, they yielded to public opinion what in safety and in justice they could no longer withhold. But the Whigs, in yielding, completely marred the benefits of the one, and made us pay a very considerable price for the other. Among all the heinous sins of Toryism, there is not one but its Whig parallel might easily be found, and we conscientiously believe that there are no acts of atrocities which the Tories have inflicted on England or Ireland, that can match those deeds which the perfidious Whigs have inflicted on our Canadian brethren; and shame to Mr. O'Connell—after his profession of sympathy, after his public promises and declaration, that he would use his power and influence to prevent the sacrifice of their constitutional rights—he acquiesced by his absence, in the most despotic act that ever disgraced an English House of Commons in the blackest days of Toryism, and which act, and all the horrible consequences that have followed, might have been prevented if he and his other Whig admirers had been true to justice. Talk of what the Tories did in America, match their deeds if you can with what the Whigs have inflicted on Canada. They have not scrupled to destroy every vestige of their constitutional rights—their selfish and arrogant myrmidons were the first to provoke Canadian resistance to their unparalleled despotism—they then imprisoned their legislators and proscribed and hunted down the best men of the country, they have brutally encouraged ignorant savages to glut their thirst for blood, they have destroyed the freedom of the press, suspended the Habeas Corpus Act, proclaimed martial law, burned their churches, sacked their villages, laid the country in ashes at the fiat of one man, and confiscation and plunder have been the warwhoop of their

brutal soldiers. Gracious Creator of human beings! talk of the crimes of Toryism! match Whiggery with Nicholas instead.

"As to the Coercion Act, which Mr. O'Connell denounces as the standing memento of the Grey and Brougham (and he should have added Melbourne) Administration, we think that next to that despotic measure he ought not to forget the barbarous and arbitrary powers of the one that was substituted for it *by his own approval* in 1835; and which, when Sharman Crawford moved for its repeal, Mr. O'Connell pronounced to be '*a very necessary law.*' We hope that the Irish people will make an analysis of these two acts for Mr. O'Connell's especial perusal.

"We must here, however, make an observation on the absurd notion of gratitude inculcated by Mr. O'Connell and his disciples. It is assumed that because a set of men, called Whigs or Tories, some fifty years or a century ago performed a good action or a dishonourable deed, that we forsooth and our children, must always be very grateful to the party of the one, and cherish eternal enmity against the party of the other, *though not even a relative of the persons who did either of the acts* compose the present faction. This kind of 'gratitude' may afford Mr. O'Connell an excuse for his present policy, but it is not of that description our 'common sense' inculcates.

"We think that no course of policy that could have been adopted could have done more mischief to the cause of Radicalism, than has the absurd folly of pulling down and the setting up of parties and factions. We have long since given up this game, and it shall be our policy for the future, *to prevent any faction from possessing political ascendancy in this country*, if we can prevent it, aye, even a Radical *faction* itself, for the principle of Radicalism is opposed to all faction. And in thus expressing our resolve, we think (however contemptible we may appear) we have the power to prevent *the supremacy* of either Whig or Tory Faction. Nor do we want any 'leader' or party individual to assist us to effect this object.

"Sincerely hoping that you will give up your devoted at-

tachment to party men and measures of every description, that the good and the wise of all classes among you will be united equally against Whig and Tory domination, and that you will urge your representatives to break through the trammels of *political expediency*, and advocate those broad principles of justice, which can alone redeem our common country. We remain with truth and sincerity your fellow-countrymen."

Now there was no doubt of the truth of Mr. O'Connell's assertions regarding the physical force mania generated in many parts of the kingdom by the speeches of O'Connor, Stephens, and Oastler against the New Poor Law; the great injustice was in branding all the Radicals of England and Scotland as the abettors and followers of these men. For it was well known to him that a large section of them had for years previously disclaimed the doctrine of physical force, even when he himself was reminding his countrymen that those "who would be free, themselves must strike the blow." He knew well that the Birmingham Council, the members of our Association, and a number of the Radical and Working Men's Associations of Scotland had repudiated the doctrine, and had exerted themselves in various ways to check its progress. The fact was known to him that a large number of the Radicals of Edinburgh met on the Carlton Hill and passed a series of resolutions condemnatory of the physical-force folly, which were warmly responded to by other towns, and were ably supported by the earnest eloquence and abilities of such men as John Fraser, the Editor of the *True Scotsman*, the Rev. Patrick Brewster, and numerous others. Indeed Fergus O'Connor must have considered them as highly censurable of himself, for he posted off to Edinburgh with great speed and called a meeting of his disciples together to pass votes of confidence in him and Stephens, and, as he called it, to rescind the Carlton Hill resolutions. But Mr. O'Connell's conduct was the more to be condemned as he had by his desertion and treachery to our cause, coupled with his entreaties and blarneying in favour of Whiggery, caused

many of the Liberal members of Parliament to stand aloof from our movement whose aid, coupled with his own powerful talents, would have effectually kept back the physical force advocates, and conducted our movement to a successful issue. I had it from Mr. Joseph Hume himself that it was Mr. O'Connell's entreaties to give the Whigs a fair trial *for the sake of Ireland*, that led him and others to stand aloof as they had done.

But the meeting of the Convention was now fast approaching, and so strong was the hope reposed in that meeting by the Chartist body, that the great majority of them manifested the strongest desire to sacrifice their peculiar feelings and convictions for the sake of union. A few hot-brained enthusiasts, however, were not so patriotic ; union was naught with them compared with their own blustering harangues about arming and fighting ; these and their daily invectives against everything bearing the resemblance of moderation, preparedness, or intellectual and moral effort, served to create constant irritation in our ranks, and ultimately to cause distrust and disunion. On the other hand there were not wanting exciting incidents, opposing preparations, denunciations, and ridicule, on the part of those who opposed our claims, to stir up the feelings and try the patience of poor frail humanity ; so that when the gauntlet was eventually cast down we need not wonder at the numbers prepared to take it up in the spirit of resolute and reckless defiance.

CHAPTER XI

The General Convention of the Industrious Classes originated with the Birmingham Political Union, as did also the National Rent Fund, the proposal for a Sacred Month, the plan of Simultaneous Meetings, and the first National Petition.* This last document was, I believe, drawn up by the late Mr. R. K. Douglas, then editor of the *Birmingham Journal*, an able and talented writer, and a keen, clear, eloquent speaker; one, in fact, of the most efficient men delegated to the Convention. The delegates to this body were, for the most part, appointed by very large bodies of men. The Birmingham meeting was composed of 200,000, the Manchester meeting of 300,000, that of Glasgow of 150,000, of Newcastle of 70,000, and other towns equally large in proportion to their population. The number of delegates composing the Convention was *fifty-three*, many of them representing several places, with the view to economy. Of this number three were magistrates, six newspaper editors, one clergyman of the Church of England, one Dissenting minister, and two doctors of medicine, the remainder being shopkeepers, tradesmen, and journeymen. They held their first meeting at the British Coffee House, Cockspur Street, Charing Cross, on Monday, February 4th, 1839, and subsequently met in the hall of the Honourable and Ancient Lumber Troop, Bolt Court, Fleet Street. On their first assembling the Birmingham delegates proposed me as secretary, and, though the proposition was at first strongly opposed by some of the physical-force party, I was eventually elected unanimously. This, it would seem, gave great offence to O'Connor, who was not present when the election took place, for at the next meeting he posted up a notice of

* See a copy of it in the Appendix.

motion, by the adoption of which he thought he should get rid of me as secretary. It was to the effect that persons accepting any paid office in the Convention should resign their delegation. Finding, however, that I had resolved to offer my services *gratuitously* as secretary, rather than resign my privilege as a delegate, he withdrew the notice he had given.

Not intending in this memoir to give a particular history of all the doings of the Convention, I shall confine myself to a few of the most prominent particulars, sufficient perhaps to show the causes that marred the great object we had in view, *that of creating and extending a public opinion in favour of the principles of the People's Charter.* Soon after our assembling the subject of the Queen's speech from the throne became a question for discussion, in consequence of a passage in it charging some portion of the people with "disobedience, and resistance to the laws." This induced us to put forth an address to the people (drawn up by Dr. Taylor), in which the charge was repudiated, and in which the Whigs were reminded of their own resistance to the laws, for the forcing of the Reform Bill, when Mr. William Brougham and Lord Fitzwilliam in particular publicly declared their resolution of resisting the law by the non-payment of taxes.

The rules and regulations for conducting our proceedings, drawn up by myself, were next agreed to, and a barrister consulted for ascertaining the legality of our objects, whose opinion, though very guardedly worded, seemed satisfactory to the members. On the collection of the petition sheets from different towns it was found that many parts of the country, in which there had been no political organization, had done little or nothing towards procuring signatures. This caused us to delay its presentation for a few weeks, and in the interim to send out a number of our members as missionaries to different parts of the country, with the view of making the principles of the Charter more generally known, and for obtaining additional signatures to our petition. The instructions given to our missionaries were, "to refrain from all violent and

unconstitutional language, and not to infringe the law in any manner by word or deed." Mr. James Paul Cobbett, delegate from Yorkshire, seems to have been alarmed by this resolution to send out missionaries, and shortly afterwards brought forward a series of resolutions, to the effect that the whole business of the Convention should be to present the national petition. This proposal, not being agreed to by the members, that gentleman gave in his resignation. The delay, too, in presenting the petition, gave great offence to the physical-force party, and more especially to the *Democratic Association of London*, at the head of which was Mr. George Julian Harney, one of the most indiscreet, if not the most violent, among them, for he scrupled not to flourish his dagger at public meetings, in order to give point to his perorations.* This party, being joined by a few of the most hot-headed and enthusiastic members of the Convention, were very industrious out of doors in censuring and denouncing us for our delay at their various meetings, and also created much excitement, division, and loss of time in the Convention by their insane and foolish conduct. It was to gratify this party that O'Connor brought forward his motion for calling the public meeting at the Crown and Anchor, on March 11th, at which meeting the physical force party displayed such violence and folly as to cause the Birmingham delegates, Messrs. Salt, Hadley, and Douglas, to secede from us. It may be necessary, however, to state that this violent party were greatly in the minority, both for numbers and talent, till the resignation of the Birmingham delegates and other resignations that speedily followed, whose places were supplied, for the most part, with men of less reasonable views. During the delay that took place in the presentation of the petition, those of the members not engaged as missionaries employed themselves in the discussion of a variety of questions brought before them. About the first of those questions was that of "ulterior measures," or

* Our friend Harney has since redeemed his past violence and folly, by his intelligent writings and moderation in the cause of right and justice.

measures to be adopted if the petition should be rejected. This was introduced by Bailie Craig, of Ayrshire, but which question it was judged prudent to postpone until after the presentation of the petition. The "grievances of Ireland" also gave rise to a long discussion, but very little practical benefit, as did also "the suffering in the manufacturing districts," "the factory system," the "New Rural Police Bill," and several other subjects. In fact the love of talk was as characteristic of our little house as the big one at Westminster. Among the letters read one morning was one from the London Democratic Association, containing a series of resolutions passed at one of their meetings, to the effect, "that if the Convention did its duty the Charter would be the law of the land in less than a month"; "that no delay should take place in the presentation of the national petition"; and "that every act of injustice and oppression should be immediately met by resistance." A motion that this ultra communication should not be received gave rise to a very long discussion, in which the conduct of three members, Harney, Ryder, and Marsden (who took part in the meeting referred to), was very warmly reprobated and condemned. They having expressed their approbation of the resolutions referred to during the debate, a motion was brought forward at the next meeting by Mr. Whittle, the editor of the *Champion*, to the effect that they should be called upon to offer an apology for, and disclaimer of the resolutions addressed to the Convention. They having refused to do this, a motion was brought forward the next day for expelling them, when they deemed it advisable to make the apology required, after they had thus wasted three days of our time.

Another subject, about this period, which produced great excitement in the Convention, as well as throughout the country, was the conduct of Lord John Russell's Ministry towards Mr. John Frost, of Newport (one of our members), whom they struck from the roll of magistrates for attending two Chartist meetings in London. It was thought, however, that Mr. Frost's straightfor-

ward and independent letter to Lord John Russell, in reply to the charge made against him, formed a more serious offence in the eyes of his little mightiness, than the ostensible one of attending the public meetings. That Mr. Frost's conduct, as a magistrate and a man, was greatly estimated by his townsmen may be judged of by the fact that on the first rumour of his exclusion, a testimonial was transmitted to the Home Secretary on his behalf, signed by most of the leading and influential men of the town, men of all political creeds and opinions.

In the beginning of April, Mr. Richardson brought forward a motion, of which he had given previous notice, relative to the right of the people to arm, and in a long speech quoted a great many authorities, ancient and modern, in support of his views. A resolution to the effect "that it was admitted by the highest authorities, beyond the possibility of doubt, that the people of this country had the right to use arms," was finally agreed to, it having been supported by Messrs. O'Brien, Fletcher, M'Douall, Harney, Neesom, and O'Connor, and opposed by Halley, Carpenter, Burns, Rogers, and others.

One day towards the latter end of this month O'Connor got up and called the attention of the Convention to the fact, that in the indictment sent up to the King's Bench against the Rev. Mr. Stephens, the jurors had declared on their oaths, *that the Convention was an illegal body*. On the following day he proposed "that on Monday, the 13th of May, the Convention should commence holding its sittings in Birmingham." No reasonable argument having been adduced in favour of such a motion, and thinking, moreover, that it seemed a cowardly proceeding, I thought it well to propose an amendment to the effect "that we continue to hold our sittings in London till after the presentation of the petition, and until we had come to some vote respecting the introduction of the People's Charter to Parliament." My amendment having been lost by a majority of seven, and other objections having been taken to O'Connor's motion it was postponed to a future day.

On the 6th of May the national petition was taken to

the residence of Mr. Attwood, in Panton Square, that gentleman, in conjunction with Mr. Fielden, having promised to present it to Parliament on the following Monday

When all the sheets of this bulky document were united it was found to be *nearly three miles long*, and signed by 1,283,000 persons, all of them, I believe, the genuine signatures of men earnest in their desire for the suffrage, however they may have differed about the means of obtaining it. On our arrival at Mr. Attwood's, that gentleman informed us that he was then doubtful when he should be able to present it, as Lord John Russell's resignation from the Ministry was expected that evening. We informed him that we were desirous that he should present it as early as possible, and that he should also take the earliest opportunity to move for leave to bring in a Bill entitled the People's Charter. This last he refused to do, as he said he did not agree with all the points of it, especially that of electoral districts. A long conversation then took place regarding what he would do in the matter, which, he said, would altogether depend on the manner in which he was treated by the House of Commons when he presented the petition. In fact the issue of paper money was more important to Mr. Attwood than the People's Charter. One of our members, Mr. Vincent, having been arrested on the 10th of May, 1839, on a warrant by the magistrates of Newport, on a charge of conspiracy and sedition, Fergus O'Connor again brought forward his motion for adjourning to Birmingham. The topics of his speech were, the change of ministers; the arrest of Vincent, the safety of the Convention, and the sympathy and support we should have if we adjourned to Birmingham. In this proposal he was supported by many delegates who had previously opposed it, as the change in the ministry had rendered it doubtful when the petition would be presented. There were others who opposed it on the grounds that we had not yet agreed to the project of "ulterior measures," of which so much had been said. And here I deem it necessary to give a brief history of our "Manifesto of Ulterior Measures," for reasons hereafter stated,

As many members of the Convention lodged at the Arundle Coffee House, opposite St. Clement's Church, a number of us were induced to subscribe a small sum for the purpose of retaining the first floor of that place to ourselves, it being a very convenient place for assembling together to talk matters over when we were not engaged in the business of the Convention. As many of the physical force party, on those occasions, as well as in the convention, had talked largely of "ulterior measures," without seeming to entertain any very clear ideas on the subject, many of the more prudent portion thought it necessary to call a meeting of the delegates together in that room for the purpose of talking the matter over and arriving at some definite opinion on the subject, rather than trust to its being hastily introduced to the Convention by some hot-headed member without thought or consideration. A meeting of the delegates was therefore called at the "Arundle" for the purpose of talking the subject over among themselves before it was introduced publicly to the Convention. At this meeting a large number of the delegates attended; a chairman was appointed, and every member present called upon in rotation for his opinion regarding the ulterior measures to be adopted should the prayer of the petition be rejected. As their secretary, I took notes of the opinions given and conclusions arrived at, which in the course of the week I embodied in the form of a manifesto, and laid before them at their next meeting at the same place. At that meeting the Rev. Mr. Stephens attended, and, after the manifesto was read over, he and others were very complimentary in its praise. It was then resolved that we should hold another meeting at the rooms of the Working Men's Association for the purpose of discussing it clause by clause. After it had been thus discussed it was all but unanimously agreed to, the only dissentient being Mr. Halley, of Dunfermline. Being thus far agreed to, it was resolved that we should publicly name a committee the next day in the Convention for considering the subject of ulterior measures. We did so, the committee named being Messrs. Frost, O'Connor, Bussy,

Pitkeithley, and Mills, together with myself as secretary. The manifesto as prepared was laid before them, and, after some slight verbal alterations, was agreed to, and ordered to be laid before the Convention as their report. Before, however, this could be done, O'Connor had proposed the adjournment to Birmingham, as before described; so that when the manifesto was brought before the Convention, it was resolved "that the further consideration of it be deferred till we got to Birmingham." To that town we accordingly went on the 13th of May, and were welcomed by a vast assemblage of the people, whose excitement about this period had been greatly increased by the arbitrary conduct of their local authorities regarding the right of meetings in the Bull-ring, coupled with Lord John Russell's letter to the magistracy *offering arms to any association of the middle classes that might be formed for putting down the Chartist meetings.* The day after our arrival at Birmingham the consideration of the manifesto took place, which, after some trifling amendment, was adopted, and ten thousand copies of it ordered to be printed and circulated. At the next meeting O'Connor proposed that in the event of any attempt being made to interfere with the simultaneous meetings, about to be held, the delegates should repair to Birmingham, declare their meetings permanent, and "recommend *the observance of all the measures contained in the manifesto.*" During the Whitsun holidays the delegates repaired to their different constituencies for the purpose of attending the simultaneous meetings, and for ascertaining the opinion of the people *regarding the manifesto.* O'Connor (and others who have since condemned that document) spoke at several of those meetings, but not one word did they say in opposition to, or in repudiation of it at that time, but when I was cooped up in Warwick Gaol he had the impudence to boast that he was the man that prevented the Sacred Month from taking place! although, as described, he was an active party in recommending it. He subsequently on several occasions endeavoured to persuade his dupes that I was the concoctor of the violent measure, although himself and his disciples

were the first to talk of arming, of the run upon the banks, and the Attwood project of *the Sacred Month*. I mention these facts in no way to disclaim the hand I had in it, although I believe that I did an act of folly in being a party to *some of its provisions;* but I sacrificed much in that Convention for the sake of union, and for the love and hope I had in the cause, and I have still vanity enough to believe that if I had not been imprisoned I could have prevented many of the outbreaks and follies that occurred. The following is a copy of the manifesto referred to :—

"Countrymen and Fellow-Bondsmen,—The fiat of our privileged oppressors has gone forth—that the multitude must be kept in subjection. The mask of CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTY is thrown for ever aside, and the form of DESPOTISM stands hideously before us : for, let it be no longer disguised, THE GOVERNMENT OF ENGLAND IS A DESPOTISM AND HER INDUSTRIOUS MILLIONS SLAVES. Her 'constitutional rights' are specious forms wanting substance ; her forms of 'justice' subterfuges for legal plunder and class domination ; her 'right of the subject' is slavery, without the slave's privilege ; her 'right of petitioning' a farce ; her 'religious freedom' a cheat.

"Fellow-Countrymen,—Our stalwart ancestors boasted of rights which the simplicity of their laws made clear, and their bravery protected ; but we, their degenerate children, have patiently yielded to one infringement after another till the last vestige of RIGHT has been lost in the *mysticism* of legislation, and the armed force of the country transferred to soldiers and policemen. But if there be yet within you a latent spark of that quality which was wont to distinguish Englishmen throughout the globe—of that manly courage with which our forefathers sacredly guarded our island, and arrested with their iron grasp foreign foe or domestic spoiler—you will start from your political slumber, and resolve, by all that renders life desirable, to make your homes happy, your laws just, and your altars free, or peril life in the attempt.

"We will not, however, point out a path in which we

are not prepared to lead; neither will we peril our political rights on any ill-advised proposal, which would give joy to the enemy, but death to our cause. But we are prepared—and we trust that you, our constituents, are also—to peril that life which God has bestowed for no holier purpose than to righteously endeavour to make our country free and our brethren happy. And in thus expressing our determination, we appeal to Almighty Wisdom with reverence, and to impartial posterity with confidence—that we have right and justice on our side.

"Believing that our political burthens and social grievances are the result of exclusive law-making, we have provided for that evil what we conceive to be a remedy —'The People's Charter'—and public opinion has been concentrated in favour of that remedy to an extent unprecedented in the annals of our country. We have embodied its principles in a *Petition to Parliament;* those who dared to brave the menaces of employers, the sneers of faction and the power of wealth, have appended their signatures to that petition, and millions who dared not brave starvation and misery to do so, have responded in silence to its prayer.

"The answer, fellow-countrymen, to your 'constitutional' and *peaceful* application may now be anticipated. We were prepared on the presentation of the petition for the subtle sophistry and fraudulent assertions of Whiggery; *but we may now be prepared for the worst;* for we clearly perceive the despotic determination of both Whigs and Tories to maintain their power and supremacy at any risk.

"We see victim after victim daily selected, and silently witness one constitutional right after another annihilated; we perceive the *Whig* and the shuffling *professor of Liberalism* uniting their influence to bind down the millions, and, if possible, to stifle their prayers and petitions for justice.

"Men and women of Britain, will you tamely submit to the insult? Will you submit to incessant toil from birth to death, to give in tax and plunder out of every *twelve* hours' labour the proceeds of *nine* hours to support

your idle and insolent oppressors ? Will you much longer submit to see the greatest blessings of mechanical art converted into the greatest curses of social life ?—to see children forced to compete with their parents, wives with their husbands, and the whole of society morally and physically degraded to support the aristocracies of wealth and title ? Will you thus allow your wives and daughters to be degraded, your children to be nursed in misery, stultified by toil, and to become the victims of the vice our corrupt institutions have engendered ? Will you permit the stroke of affliction, the misfortunes of poverty and the infirmities of age to be branded and punished as crimes, and give our selfish oppressors an excuse for rending asunder man and wife, parent and child, and continue passive observers till you and yours become the victims ?

" Perish the cowardly feeling ; and infamous be the passive being who can witness his country's degradation, without a struggle to prevent or a determination to remove it ! Rather like Samson would we cling to the pillars which sustain our social fabric, and, failing to base it upon principles of justice, fall victims beneath its ruins.

" Shall it be said, fellow-countrymen, that four millions of men, capable of bearing arms, and defending their country against every foreign assailant, allowed a few domestic oppressors to enslave and degrade them ? That they suffered the constitutional right of possessing arms, to defend the constitutional privileges their ancestors bequeathed to them, to be disregarded or forgotten, till one after another they have been robbed of their rights, and have submitted to be awed into silence by the bludgeons of policemen ? Hence our modern legislators, fearing that knowledge has even converted soldiers into patriots, are preparing to dispense with their services in England, and to substitute a legion of police, to mar the peace of every village in the empire.

" Men of England, Scotland, and Wales, we have sworn with your aid to achieve our liberties or die ! and in this resolve we seek to save our country from a fate we

do not desire to witness. If you longer continue passive slaves, *the fate of unhappy Ireland will soon be yours*, and that of Ireland more degraded still. For, be assured, the joyful hope of freedom which now inspires the millions, if not speedily realized, will turn into wild revenge. The sickening thought of unrequited toil—their cheerless homes—their stunted starving offspring—the pallid partners of their wretchedness—their aged parents piping apart in a workhouse—the state of trade presenting to their imaginations no brighter prospects—these, together with the petty tyranny that daily torments them, will exasperate them to destroy what they are denied the enjoyment of. Terror will soon give wings to British capital, and it will fly to other climes where security can be found. The middle-class population of our country—the distributors and exchangers of wealth—will be broken down by bankruptcy and insolvency. Our famed commerce, which at present is sustained by a breath, will be destroyed. The wrongs which landlords, farmers and manufacturers, have conspired to heap upon the working millions, will burst into a flame; and the property of our cities, no ways vengeance proof, will be the more in peril by being the basis of legislative injustice.

"This, fellow-countrymen, is a state of things we are anxious to avert, and however the paid libellers of the day may impute to us other motives, we solemnly believe that the Radical Reformers are the only restraining power that prevents the execution of an outraged people's vengeance. We would therefore urge all friends *of peace and order* to declare at once in favour of justice; and unite with us to obtain that share of political power for the unenfranchised people which cannot much longer be safely withheld. How, we would ask, can those of the middle classes, who are yet standing apart from us, reconcile their conduct with their conscience, when they were parties to a compact with us to contend for the Reform Bill, and promised in return they would make it a stepping-stone to our political rights, while they still ungratefully neglect us?

"Why will they presumptuously risk the consequences

of such selfish conduct? What fruits do they hope to gain by their exclusiveness? They are now sowing the seeds of disappointment; we would implore them to beware of the harvest.

"Do they ardently desire the happiness and prosperity of their country? Do they seek to develop the moral and intellectual energies of the people? Do they aim at cheap and efficient government? Do they desire equal laws justly administered? Do they wish for security for person and property, and to give to industry its honest reward? We, too, are in pursuit of similar objects; *let common interests, then, unite us in the pursuit.*

"We are contending for no visionary or impracticable scheme. The principles of our charter were the laws and customs of our ancestors, under which property was secure, and the working people happy and contented. Nay, these principles are now in practical operation in different parts of the world; and what forms the strongest argument in favour of their general adoption is, that wherever they are in practice the people are prosperous and happy.

"But, fellow-countrymen, both Whigs and Tories are seeking, by every means in their power, to crush our peaceful organization in favour of our charter. They are sending their miscreant spies to urge the people into madness; they are arming the rich against the poor, and man against his fellow-man. The war hounds of their will are trained and loosened for our slaughter; every bulwark of their injustice is fortified against us; and they fain hope that our impatient impetuosity may afford sport for their vengeance, and their triumph over our defeat give stability to their power.

"We trust, brethren, that you will disappoint their malignity, and live to regain our rights by other means—at least, we trust you will not *commence* the conflict. We have resolved to obtain our rights, 'peaceably if we may, forcibly if we must'; but woe to those who begin the warfare with the millions, or who forcibly restrain their peaceful agitation for justice—at one signal they will be en-

lightened to their error, and in one brief contest their power will be destroyed.

"You appointed us, fellow-countrymen, the humble instruments of your will and determination; we have performed the duty you imposed on us to the extent of our power, and are prepared still further to execute your commands. But, from the numerous communications we have received, we believe you expect us to collect the will and intentions of the country respecting *the most efficient means* for causing the People's Charter to become the law of the land.

"Anxious, therefore, clearly to ascertain the opinions and determination of the people in the shortest possible time, and doubly anxious to secure their righteous object *bloodless and stainless*, we respectfully submit the following propositions for your serious consideration:—

"That at all the simultaneous public meetings to be held for the purpose of petitioning the Queen to call good men to her councils, as well as at all subsequent meetings of your unions or associations up to the 1st of July, you submit the following questions to the people there assembled:—

"1. Whether they will be prepared, *at the request of the Convention*, to withdraw all sums of money they may individually or collectively have placed in savings banks, private banks, or in the hands of any person hostile to their just rights?

"2. Whether, at the same request, they will be prepared immediately to convert all their paper money into gold and silver?

"3. Whether, *if the Convention shall determine that a sacred month* will be necessary to prepare the millions to secure the charter of their political salvation, they will firmly resolve to abstain from their labours during that period, as well as from the use of *all intoxicating drinks?*

"4. Whether, according to their old constitutional right —a right which modern legislators would fain annihilate—

they have prepared themselves *with the arms of freemen to defend the laws and constitutional privileges their ancestors bequeathed to them ?*

" 5. Whether they will provide themselves with *chartist candidates*, so as to be prepared to propose them for their representatives at the next general election ; and, if returned *by show of hands* such candidates to consider themselves veritable representatives of the people—to meet in London at a time hereafter to be determined on ? *

" 6. Whether they will resolve *to deal exclusively with Chartists*, and in all cases of persecution rally around and protect all those who may suffer in their righteous cause ?

" 7. Whether by all and every means in their power they will perseveringly contend for the great objects of the People's Charter, and resolve that no counter agitation for a less measure of justice shall divert them from their righteous object ?

" 8. Whether the people will determine to obey all the just and constitutional requests of the majority of the Convention ?

" After these simultaneous public meetings the Convention will hold its sittings, when by its deliberations, its missionaries, or otherwise, it will endeavour to ascertain the opinions of the people on all these important questions ; and having thus carefully ascertained the opinions and determination of the country, immediately after the 1st of July it will proceed to carry the will of the people into execution.

" Remember, brethren, our motto is *Union*, *Prudence*, and *Energy ;* by these combined we shall win the people's charter in spite of the people's enemies. Hoping that you will steadfastly and cautiously observe this motto, we remain your faithful representatives,

" The Members of the Convention."

* This was James Bronterre O'Brien's plan.

CHAPTER XII

Although there was great excitement throughout the country in consequence of the different arrests that had taken place, and the despotic conduct of the local authorities in many counties, the *Simultaneous Meetings* were very numerously attended, and went off very peaceably, the Convention having previously put forth their advice on the subject. During the recess, however, it became a serious question among the more prudent portion of the members, as to the course to be pursued when the Convention resumed its sittings at Birmingham. For though many of them had advocated the possession of arms, as an ancient and constitutional right, and as a means for securing protection and respect, they were far from advising the public exhibition or use of them. Still less were they agreed on the propriety of a general suspension of labour for a month, although they were not adverse to the discussion of the subject, as a threat to our adversaries. In fact, one of the Scotch delegates, Abraham Duncan, very pithily described the policy of this party when he said—"We must shake our oppressors well over hell's mouth, but we must not let them drop in." The withdrawal of their trade and benefit funds, and a run upon the banks, however, they thought perfectly right and justifiable, as it was their own money, and they had the precedent for it from the Whigs. The putting forth of an address, therefore, on this subject was about one of the first measures they adopted on their return to Birmingham; unfortunately coupled with an addenda regarding the sacred month which had much better been avoided. Respecting this *sacred month*, some few of us entertained the opinion, that before committing ourselves (as the Convention subsequently did when I was in prison), by the fixing of any specific time for its commencement, the Convention

should fix a day *for one or two trades to cease from labour*, and at the same time call upon the country to raise a fund for supporting them. This we thought would be a mode *of testing the country;* for if persons were not disposed to pay a small sum weekly for such an object, we could not expect that they would agree to cease labouring altogether; and then we should have had a very reasonable excuse for abandoning the project. I had in fact made arrangements for preparing an Address on this subject, to be laid before the Convention on the Monday, but my arrest on the Saturday prevented the accomplishment of my desire.

The following are the circumstances that led to my arrest, and that of my fellow-prisoner, Mr. Collins:—It appears that the middle classes of Birmingham, during the agitation *for the Reform Bill*, were in the habit of meeting in the Bull-ring, in conjunction with the working classes, during a portion of their dinner hours and in the evenings, for the purpose of hearing the news of the day; when stirring appeals from the newspapers were read, and speeches made regarding the measure then before Parliament. The Reform Bill, however, being passed, a great change was soon seen in the political conduct of some of the leading reformers of Birmingham, as well as of other towns *Municipal reform* had given power and authority to some, and Whig patronage snug places to others. When, however, the agitation for the People's Charter commenced, the working classes, following the example of their former leaders, began to hold their meetings also in the Bull-ring. But this of course was not to be endured by the ex-reform authorities; what was once right and legal in themselves was denounced as seditious and treasonable in the multitude.* The poor infatuated workers, however, could not

* An instance of the extreme measures the middle classes were prepared to resort to at the first reform period was communicated to me by one of the principals engaged to carry it out. When the Duke of Wellington was called to the ministry with the object, it was believed, of silencing the political unions and putting down the reform agitation, an arrangement was entered into between the leading reformers of the North and Midland Counties and those of London *for seizing the wives and children of the aristocracy and carrying*

perceive the distinction of the Birmingham authorities between the two political measures, but continued to meet as usual; and though several of them were arrested, and held to bail for their obtuseness, their meetings were kept up. At last the governing powers of Birmingham, indignant at such proceedings, sent up to London to their former friends and allies requesting them to send down a strong posse of the new police to assist them. They came down by rail, and were no sooner out of their vans than they were led on by the authorities, truncheon in hand, and commenced a furious onslaught upon the men, women, and children who were assembled in the Bull-ring, listening peaceably to a person reading the newspaper. This proceeding, as may be supposed, greatly exasperated the people, and speedily a cry was raised for "Holloway," one of their usual places of meeting a little out of town. On their way thither, happening to pass St. Thomas's Church, they bethought themselves of a weapon with which to defend themselves should they be again attacked, and pulled down the railings round the churchyard. Once armed, however, they resolved on again returning to town to wreak their vengeance on the police. On returning, however, they were met by Dr. Taylor and Dr. McDouall, two of our Convention, who, after much persuasion, induced them to throw away their arms. Dr. Taylor also subsequently interfered to prevent the ill-usage of one of the police, and very soon after was arrested for having been seen among the crowd.

The morning after this brutal attack, a number of the working classes of Birmingham called at the Convention Rooms, and stated that they were anxious that some public expression of opinion should be made regarding the outrage, and some advice given to them as to what was best

them as hostages into the North until the Reform Bill was passed. My informant, Mr. Francis Place, told me that *a thousand pounds were placed in his hands in furtherance of the plan,* and for hiring carriages and other conveniences, a sufficient number of volunteers having prepared matters and held themselves in readiness. The run upon the bank, however, having been effective in driving the duke from office, this extreme measure was not necessary.

to be done respecting their right of public meeting. Feeling most strongly with them, that a great injustice had been inflicted, I drew up and proposed to the Convention the three following resolutions, which were unanimously agreed to, and ordered to be printed. They were signed by myself as secretary, and taken to the printer by one of our members, Mr. John Collins :—

" 1st.—That this Convention is of opinion that a wanton, flagrant, and unjust outrage has been made upon the people of Birmingham by a bloodthirsty and unconstitutional force from London, acting under the authority of men who, when out of office, sanctioned and took part in the meetings of the people ; and now, when they share in public plunder, seek to keep the people in social slavery and political degradation.

" 2nd.—That the people of Birmingham are the best judges of their own right to meet in the Bull-ring or elsewhere—have their own feelings to consult respecting the outrage given, and are the best judges of their own power and resources in order to obtain justice.

" 3rd.—That the summary and despotic arrest of Dr. Taylor, our respected colleague, affords another convincing proof of the absence of all justice in England, and clearly shows that there is no security for life, liberty, or property till the people have some control over the laws which they are called upon to obey."

These resolutions were not posted long about the town before the printer was arrested, who, it seems, was speedily liberated on naming the person who had brought him the manuscript. The authorities then sent for Mr. Salt, one of the members of the Convention who had resigned, with the view of getting him to identify my handwriting. Having so far satisfied themselves, Mr. Collins and myself were next arrested, and brought up for examination before the newly-made recorder, Mr. Hill ; and Messrs. P. H. Muntz, Shaw, Clark, Chance and Walker, magistrates of Birmingham. It was rather singular that the recorder

was the gentleman whom we had consulted in London a few months previously *regarding the legality of our movement*. As there were no witnesses brought forward against us on this occasion, the recorder adopted the very un-English mode of questioning us, with the view of getting us to make such admissions as should self-convict us. In this course it would appear that he succeeded, to his own and the magistrates' satisfaction, for we were committed to take our trial at the next assizes, the bail required for our appearance being £1000 each. We were accordingly sent off the next morning to Warwick Gaol till bail could be provided, and in the meantime the magistrates raised every possible objection to the bail offered, even requesting the bail offered for Mr. Collins *to be bound over to good behaviour*, as well as to appear at the assizes. One of my bail, Mr. Watts, of Islington, they at first refused, because he could not give a reference to a banker in town, although he offered to leave bank scrip, and title deeds to the amount of £1600 in their hands till the trial took place. And it was not till after Mr. Leader, M.P. for Westminster, and Sir William Molesworth had offered to become my bail, that the magistrates agreed to accept the bail first offered, after they had been the means of keeping us in prison for *nine days*.

During this period of our imprisonment a number of other arrests had taken place, and the town of Birmingham kept in a very excited state by the constant aggressions made upon the people by the police. I may here remark that their conduct was subsequently made the subject of a public inquiry by the Town Council of Birmingham, headed by Mr. Joseph Sturge, and the opinion arrived at was couched in almost the very terms of one of the resolutions for which I was imprisoned, namely, "That it was proved that a brutal and bloody attack had been made upon the people of Birmingham, and that it was their opinion that if the police had not attacked the people, no disorder would have occurred, and they considered the riot was incited by the London police." The excitement, however, was, as I have said, continued from day to day by the

constant collisions between the people and the police, aided at times by the soldiery, till, on the evening of the 15th of July, it broke through all bounds. It would seem that the news of our bail having been accepted, and that we were expected into town that evening, had led great numbers of the people to again assemble in the Bull-ring. The sudden appearance of the police for the purpose of dispersing them, only served to exasperate them into frenzy. In a short time the police were scattered, the gas-lights extinguished, and a rush made upon the shops of several persons in the Bull-ring, who had rendered themselves peculiarly obnoxious to the people by their recent conduct, and very speedily their shops were in flames. On our return from Warwick towards Birmingham we were fortunately met on the road by Mr. Collins's brother and two or three of his friends, who had come for the purpose of making us acquainted with this lamentable affair. This determined us at once to change our route, so as to enter Birmingham by an opposite direction to that we were going. And fortunately it was for us that we met with those persons, as we should otherwise have entered through the Bull-ring, and possibly have been charged with the burnings. As it was, the outrage was in a great measure laid to our charge, and the weapons, said to have been taken from persons by the police on that occasion, were brought forward by Lord Campbell and laid upon the table during our trial, as if to prejudice the jury still further against us. On our return to town I drew up a petition to both Houses of Parliament, declaring the indignities to which we had been subjected in Warwick Gaol while we were waiting for trial, *before we were tried or found guilty of any offence.* The one to the Commons was presented by Mr. Leader, and that to the Lords by Lord Brougham, the latter having made a very impressive speech on the occasion. When he came to that part of our petition about my hair being cropped by a common felon, it was received with a derisive laugh by some members of the House of Privilege, which at once was met by a severe rebuke from Lord Brougham. He said, "I

am extremely mortified to perceive that such a statement as this should produce in any part of this House tokens of merriment. I deem it to be the most disgraceful conduct I have ever known in any assembly. I feel almost ashamed to belong to such an assembly. I really am ashamed to belong to a place where any man could hear of such indignities being committed upon the persons of their fellow-creatures, and consider it a fit subject for mirth. It can only, however, I trust, be with very few of your lordships." The following are extracts from our petition :—

"That when your petitioners were removed to the County Gaol of Warwick, they were stripped stark naked in the presence of the turnkeys, and measured in that condition, and examined all over, to discover any particular marks on their bodies, an indignity by them so severely felt that they find themselves compelled to notice it emphatically to your right honourable House.

"That your petitioners were then taken into a room, in which there were not less than eight prisoners, recently brought into the gaol, and with these men, some of whom were in a filthy state, were compelled again to strip themselves naked, bathe in the same cistern of water as the men did, and dry themselves as well as they could on the same towel.

"That a common felon was ordered to crop the hair of your petitioner, William Lovett, and to this indignity your petitioner was also compelled to submit.

"That their shirts were taken from them, and the initial letters of their names, in roman letters an inch long, stamped thereon in indelible ink.

"That your petitioners were then put into a ward where there were twenty-two prisoners, one of whom was infected with the itch.

"That during each of the nine days your petitioners were confined, they were at five different times, and sometimes more frequently, each day compelled to fall into their exact place among the prisoners in a row in the open

yard, to answer to their names, receive their food, to be examined by the doctor to discover if they had taken the itch, and to be exhibited to persons who came to see the prison, when they were compelled to stand bareheaded.

"That your petitioners were limited to the common gaol allowance, and no one was allowed to supply them with any addition thereto.

"That this allowance consisted of a small loaf, which your petitioners suppose might weigh 1½ lbs., one pint of oatmeal gruel for breakfast, which was given at nine in the morning; for dinner at 12 o'clock about 2 ounces of cheese, excepting Sundays and Wednesdays, when they were served with a pint of what was called beef soup, in which there was no other appearance of meat than some slimy, stringy particles, which, hanging about the wooden spoon, so offended your petitioners' stomachs that they were compelled to forgo eating it; and at 6 p.m. one more pint of oatmeal gruel; while from 12 o'clock on Sundays until 9 a.m. on Monday, your petitioners were not served with any food.

"That in addition to this, the common gaol allowance, your petitioners, in common with all *untried prisoners*, were permitted to expend *three pence* per day in butter, sugar, bacon, eggs, salt, pepper, worsted, thread, or tape; but your petitioners were not allowed to have either eggs or bacon cooked, and had themselves no access to fire to cook them, and did actually eat both eggs and bacon raw.

"That during eleven hours out of the twenty-four, your petitioners were locked up in a vaulted cell paved with brick, at the door of which, to their great discomfort, they were compelled to leave their boots: that in this cell there was neither chair, stool, nor table, the whole furniture consisting of a wooden tub, an iron bedstead with a wooden bottom, a wooden pillow, a straw mattress, two blankets, a rug, but no sheets.

"That your petitioners were, under the penalty of solitary confinement, compelled to make their bed in a particular manner, and each morning fold up the mattress,

etc., in a close and compact form, to the exclusion of air, so that, when unrolled in the evening, the smell was offensive to an extent not to be conceived.

"That during two hours each morning, a half-hour before being locked up at night, and once in each day, your petitioners were turned into the yard, and not allowed to retreat into any place of shelter.

"That your petitioners were prohibited from seeing any person, excepting on four days in the week, and then in the presence of the gaoler, at certain fixed times, only for a few minutes, a wicket-gate with spikes on the top of it being between them and their friends.

"That the watch and money of your petitioners, and everything else their pockets contained, were taken from them, and they were not allowed the use of knife, fork, plate, nor any other vessel save a small wooden tub, and a spoon of the same material.

"That no books or printed papers (the Bible or Prayer-book excepted) were permitted: that your petitioners were debarred from the free use of pen, ink, and paper; no letter addressed to them was permitted to reach them until it had been examined, and every part of the paper which was not written upon carefully torn off.

"That your petitioners were not allowed to write to any person, however necessary it might be, but in a particular room, where other prisoners were also allowed to write, and in which they were locked up, and were compelled to leave their letters open, to be examined before they were dispatched by post.

"That your petitioners at the same time beg to be understood as making no complaint of the personal conduct of the Governor, Mr. Atkins.

"That your petitioners having been thus treated as convicted felons, where the discipline is particularly severe, having been treated with great indignity, having been deprived of all comforts in every respect, limited both in quantity and quality of food, and otherwise treated as shown in this their petition, pray your Right Honourable House to take the same into your consideration as conduct

such as no Englishman should be subject to while under confinement pending the production of bail, and *previous to being convicted of any crime*," etc. etc.

It will now be necessary to mention that during the time we had been in prison waiting for bail, Mr. Attwood had brought forward a motion in the Commons—"That the House resolve itself into a Committee for considering the prayer of the National Petition"—the Petition itself having been presented on the 14th of June. Mr. Attwood's speech on this occasion was mixed up with many of his currency crotchets, and the motion was but feebly supported by the Liberal Members, many of them contenting themselves with a silent vote; while Lord John Russell, in his opposition to it, scrupled not to introduce all kinds of false and virulent charges against the petitioners; among others charging them with the desire for an equal division of property. The motion was lost by a majority of 189.

The Convention, now having reassembled in London, resumed the discussion regarding the sacred month; and finding Mr. Attwood's motion rejected, a great number of their body arrested and bound over for trial, the Government justifying the onslaught that had been made upon the people, and the police and authorities actively engaged in every possible way in putting down the meetings of the people, came to a resolution—"That in their opinion *the people should work no longer after the* 12*th of August*, unless the power of voting for Members of Parliament, to protect their labour, is guaranteed to them." This resolution, I heard, having been come to in a very thin meeting, produced much dissatisfaction among the absent members, many of whom were then engaged with their constituents in different parts of the country. Further inquiry also proved that the Convention had been grossly deceived, regarding the preparedness of the people in many districts, by the false and exaggerated statements of many of their correspondents. These accordingly led to a rediscussion of the subject, and on the 6th of August, the proposal for

the observance of a sacred month was abandoned, and on the 6th of the following month, on a motion by Mr. O'Brien, the Convention was dissolved.

As before stated, Mr. Collins and myself were bound over to attend the Warwick Assizes in July, 1839, as were also Dr. Taylor and G. J. Harney. The charges against the two last were, however, ultimately abandoned. The first cases tried were those of the persons charged with the riot and burnings in the Bull-ring, four of whom were condemned for death, but eventually transported. My trial took place on the 6th of August, before Mr. Justice Littledale; Mr. Collins' having taken place the day before. The three resolutions, already referred to, were charged against us as a *seditious libel;* my offence being for writing them, and my colleague for taking them to the printer. It had been arranged between us, while we were in prison, waiting for bail, that we should both defend ourselves; myself to defend the right of public meeting—which had been outraged by the police—as well as the principles involved in the charge against us; and Mr. Collins to bring forward the whole proceedings respecting the Bull-ring, and the attack upon the people. When, however, Mr. Collins arrived at Birmingham, his friends dissuaded him from this course, and advised the retaining of Serjeant Goulbourne to defend him. This very unfortunate advice, which diverted my friend Collins from his resolution, was to me a source of great annoyance, as it obliged me to make fresh arrangements, and to collect new matter so as to embrace, as far as possible, the whole case. Some of my friends, also, were influenced by it, and began to think that I was too presuming in seeking to defend myself; and several of them quoted to me the old adage: "That he who defends himself has a fool for his client." But recollecting a saying of Lord Lyndhurst, on John Cleave's trial, that "that was an adage made by the lawyers," I was not much influenced by it. When also I arrived at Warwick, Serjeant Goulbourne did all he could to dissuade me from making "*my political speech*," as he called it, and to leave the both cases to him. But I was

firm in my determination to have my say; being satisfied that there were points to be defended that no counsel would contest, and more especially a Tory one. This resolution of mine would seem to have led to two indictments being prepared, that against Mr. Collins being brought on first, probably in compliance with the request of the learned Serjeant. In point of justice, however, my case should have been the first, as I was evidently the chief offender, being the writer of the libel. But, after the learned Serjeant had made the defence of my colleague *a mere party question of Whig and Tory*, and had done his best to excite the ire of the Attorney-General, Lord Campbell, and after the condemnation of Mr. Collins, for the minor offence of taking the copy to the printer, it will be seen that I had no possible chance of escape, whatever I might urge in my defence. But it may be asked, how do I know that Serjeant Goulbourne made the defence of Mr. Collins a *mere party question?* If further evidence is wanted than is contained in his own speech on that occasion, I will state it. It would seem that the learned gentleman was very anxious to rake up all the ultra-Whig speeches made by Lord Campbell during the agitation of the Reform Bill to fling against him on this occasion, without reference to the fate of poor Collins. He accordingly wrote a note to the Secretary of the Conservative Society at Coventry, requesting him "to send him a file of the papers of that period, stating in his note that having to defend the Chartist Collins (about whom he cared little), it was *a glorious opportunity of having a slap at the Whigs.*" The person to whom the note was entrusted to take to Coventry not finding the person to whom it was addressed, on his way back, by some mischance, fell into the water. The wet and torn note, taken from his person—by some misunderstanding—was given into the hands of Mr. Collins just as he was removed from the dock, who in the excitement and bustle of the moment, put it in his pocket. Some months afterwards, in rummaging his pockets, he found the remains of this wet note, and showed it to me, by which we discovered another proof to convince us how

lamentably our case had been injured by Serjeant Goulbourne making it a mere party question.

I need scarcely to state, that when my case came on I had but little, if any, chance of escape. In the first place I had not a fair jury ; for several of them, on the eve of my trial, had been heard to express themselves very strongly against us ; two of them in particular to *wish all the Chartists were hanged*. This fact was communicated to me by several persons who heard them say so, but, being given to believe that *I could peremptorily challenge any person on the jury*, I neglected to bring my witnesses into court, as required in cases of *misdemeanour*, so that I was left to the mercy of men who would have substituted hanging for imprisonment if they had had the power. In the next place the Attorney General had very unjustly caused to be spread out on the table a display of weapons of various kinds, said to have been taken from persons in the Bull-ring, and by his handling and referring to them during his address, evidently sought to connect me with the riots and burnings that had taken place there. And, to add to the difficulties of my defence, I had to examine, as I best could, most of the witnesses we had provided—a duty which Mr. Collins had entrusted to Serjeant Goulbourne, whereas he only called two persons to speak to the character of my colleague. When my defence had been concluded, the reply to it was made by Mr. Balguy, in the absence of the Attorney-General ; and at the conclusion of the case the jury, as may be supposed, hesitated not a moment in finding me guilty. I was therefore immediately taken from the dock, and, in that feverish, excited state, thrust into my cell without shoes on the cold brick floor. The next day I was brought up for judgment with my friend Collins, and both of us were sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment in the County Gaol.

In the course of the week, the clergyman visited the prison for the purpose of questioning new prisoners regarding their religious persuasion ; of which, I believe, a register is kept. How far any such record of the religion of prisoners is to be depended upon may be judged of by

the following :—We being new comers, some of the old stagers told us, as a valuable piece of information, that when we went into the parson's room he would ask each of us our name, trade, and religion ; and that " if we told him we were *Catholics*, the old codger would not ask us another word " ; that having been the plan they had adopted themselves to prevent any unpleasant questioning respecting the Church they attended, or the creed they professed. We were cautioned, however, not to make a mistake in giving our *trade* for our religion, as a prisoner had done shortly before. It seems he had been schooled to give his replies in the order in which the questions were generally given ; but some variation having been made in the questioning, the prisoner, when asked what religion he was, said he was " *a pearl-button maker*." This advice to us, though kindly given, I did not avail myself of ; I merely said I that was of that religion which Christ taught, and which very few in authority practised, if I might judge from their conduct ; but whether I was registered as Protestant, Catholic, or Infidel I know not.

On the morning after my trial, when my little bucket of gruel was served out to me, I took up a black-beetle in about the first spoonful ; this, together with the feverish state in which I was, caused me to take a loathing against this part of my prison fare. I therefore tried to satisfy my appetite for a few days with a little bread soaked in cold water for breakfast, and a morsel of bread and cheese for dinner. But this diet in a short time brought on a horrible diarrhœa, under which, I believe, I should have speedily sunk had not my weakly appearance attracted the notice of William Collins, Esq., the member for Warwick, one of the visiting magistrates, on his going his rounds through the prison. Being too weakly to stand, I was reclining on a dust-bin in the yard as he passed through. Seeing me look so ill, he came up to me and kindly questioned me about my health, and at once ordered me to be taken into the hospital. As soon as I recovered a little I was again ordered down to the yard, when Mr. William Collins very kindly undertook to lay before the magistrates

of the county any request we might choose to make to them. We accordingly wrote, that as we found it impossible to preserve our health on the kind of food allowed to us, we begged to be permitted to purchase a little tea, sugar, and butter, and occasionally a small quantity of meat. Also that we might have access to a fire to warm ourselves, the use of pens, ink, and paper, and be allowed to retire to our cells to read and write. This request the magistrates refused to comply with, without they had a specific authority from the Secretary of State. Mr. Collins then offered to take up to town for us a memorial to Lord John Russell. We accordingly memorialized his lordship that we might receive the like indulgences that had been granted to Wooler, Edmonds, Maddox and others, imprisoned for a similar offence in the same prison, who had been placed *on the debtors' side*, allowed to purchase their own food, and to have the free use of pens, ink, and paper. A reply to this was verbally given to us by the Rev. John Boudier, one of the magistrates, to the effect that we were to be allowed the use of pens, ink, and paper, until, in their opinion, we abused the privilege, but not the other indulgences. He said, at the same time, that "he had no hesitation in saying that any application from us to the visiting magistrates would have received much more attention but for *our highly-coloured petition!*" This, in fact, constituted our chief offence in the eyes of these gentlemen. They hated us, and did all they could to punish us when they had us in their power, for having presumed to expose the treatment we received *before trial*, as well as for the expense that exposure cost them; for, owing to that, they were obliged to erect a new and more convenient bath-room, and to provide coarse sheets for the prisoners, instead of the old filthy blankets, which stank so abominably that Mr. Collins and myself were obliged to throw open our cell window, and shake them up and down for upwards of an hour before we could bear to lie down in them. And if this speech of Mr. Boudier is not sufficient to show their animus towards us, the manner in which they acted during the whole time they had it in their power will serve

to confirm it. During our incarceration one petition and memorial after another were presented in our favour—the Working Men's Association sent two memorials, another was presented by the people of Birmingham, one by my wife, and another by Mr. Francis Place, who was indefatigable in trying to obtain an amelioration in our condition. Mr. Warburton, M.P., also very kindly interested himself on our behalf; and Mr. Thomas Duncombe very nobly brought our case before the House of Commons, together with that of other political offenders. To all of which the authorities turned a deaf ear, the only favour granted being that alluded to, together with a pint of tea instead of the prison gruel. Whenever the magistrates were applied to for any little mitigation of our severities, they invariably contended that they had no power without the sanction of the Secretary of State; and when he was memorialized he referred us to the visiting magistrates. Their reply to him was accompanied with the certificate of the prison surgeon, which was generally of the same character—"I find the prisoners in good health, and do not consider an increase of diet called for at present." Even when I was so weakened by the diarrhœa as not to be able to sit upright, he certified that I was suffering from a mere attack of the bowels common at that season of the year. My friends, not satisfied with these certificates, sent down Dr. Black to examine the state of my health. His report regarding my sinking state was laid before the Marquis of Normanby (the Secretary of State during the latter part of my imprisonment), who forwarded it to the visiting magistrates, but still they remained inexorable. Thus were we kept by them for the first six months of our imprisonment without a bit of animal food, nor should we, I believe, have had any during our whole term had we not found out some facts connected with the making of the prison soup, which we turned to our advantage. The facts were these:—The prisoner who cooked the soup and gruel for the prison being taken ill towards the end of his term, was sent into the hospital at a time when Mr. Collins and myself were both there ill. From him we learnt not only the mode by

which the soup was prepared (being parboiled and pounded up into mere fibre), but also *the quantity of meat put into it*, he having had the weighing of it, and knowing also the proportion according to the number of prisoners. Some short time after our recovery we were visited in our cell by T. Galton and —— Bracebridge, Esqrs.—two of the visiting magistrates—to whom we complained of the great hardship of being deprived of animal food. Mr. Bracebridge having expressed surprise at this, Mr. Galton said, "But you have meat in the soup, half-a-pound twice a week." We replied that we had reason for believing that they did not put that quantity in it. At this he seemed a little excited, and asked very earnestly if we intended to make that an allegation. We replied that we had been informed by the cook, who had the weighing of the meat, that for the last week he cooked, there was but from 34 lbs. to 35 lbs. of meat to make soup for a hundred and thirty odd prisoners, being little more than a *quarter of a pound for each*. At this statement Mr. Galton seemed surprised, and was very particular in writing it down. The next day, Jan. 2nd, we received a visit from Sir Eardley Wilmot. He said that he wished to see us, that he might be enabled to say so, if he should have to defend the visiting magistrates, as he expected he should when Mr. Duncombe brought forward the subject of Dr. Black's visit. He told us that it was of no consequence what Dr. Black or any other medical man said, the surgeon of the prison excepted, he being responsible. He had seen, he said, the Marquis of Normanby about three weeks ago on some other business, when our case was mentioned, and that he told him then that whatever he ordered, if even for the opening of the doors, it should be done. But he thought the Marquis would be very careful of interfering with prisoners in England, as he had burnt his fingers with them in Ireland. We then reiterated the old complaint of being kept without animal food, when he very roughly replied that prisons were not places of relaxation or pleasure, and that he had not come to argue with us. We then told him that we were desirous

of ascertaining his opinion regarding the power given to the visiting magistrates by the following clause from the prison rules :—"No prisoner who is confined under the sentence of any Court, nor any prisoner confined in pursuance of any conviction before a justice, shall receive any food, clothing, or necessaries, other than the gaol allowance, *except under such regulations and restrictions as to the justices in general, or Quarter Sessions assembled, may appear expedient*, with reference to the several classes of prisoners, *or under special circumstances to be judged of by one or more of the visiting justices.*" He replied that the magistrates certainly have the power by that clause to grant us any indulgences, but that they did not choose to exercise it, and he added that a prison was a place of punishment, and not for indulgence. We then pressed upon him the fact of our diet not being such as was specified by the rules, a copy of which we produced (having taken the precaution of bringing one in with us). He asked us if they contained the rules for the dietary. We said they did, and referred to them. He asked for what class of prisoners. The governor, who was present, said that the dietary was the same for all alike. We then pointed out to him that the rule stated *half-a-pound of meat twice a week, and soup*, whereas we had no meat. He then asked of the governor whether these were the last regulations ? He said no. We reminded him, however, that the copy we were referring to was a copy of those presented by the magistrates, and printed by order of the House of Commons, when our petition was presented. He said that the rules ought to be hung up in the prison. We replied that they were the same as those we showed to him. He then asked the governor whether these were the rules he went by ? He replied *that they were not ;* that they *had been altered about two years ago*, so as to reduce the quantity of meat in the soup *to a quarter of a pound* instead of the *half pound*. He added that the late surgeon, Mr. Birch, had always contended for the half pound of meat, but that *the present surgeon, Mr. Wilmshurst, said that that quantity made the soup too rich !* After this exposure of the doings of the

magistracy, Sir Eardley all at once began to assume a very kind and sympathizing tone towards us, and said that he had no doubt but that twelve months' imprisonment to persons like us was a far greater punishment than two years would be to many others. He also wrote off a letter the same evening to the Marquis of Normanby, in which he professed great sympathy for us, yet, nevertheless, justified the magistrates in their treatment of us; contending that they had no power by the rules to act otherwise than they had. At the same time, he hoped his lordship would relax the rules in our favour, so as to make the last six months of our confinement less rigid. The Marquis, in his reply to him, pointed out the same clause of the rules that we had, to show that the magistrates had the power to grant indulgences to prisoners, and not him; and that he thought, that, in my case at least, whose health had been represented to be delicate, some relaxation might have been reasonably made. To maintain, however, their own obstinate opinion of the rules, and at the same time get out of the invidious position in which this reply had placed them, they resolved on a provisional improvement of the dietary *of all the prisoners in the gaol*, giving them an addition of the *two half pounds of meat in a solid form*, which caused great rejoicing throughout the prison. This change was a great blessing to both of us; and without it, I believe, I should never have survived the term of my imprisonment. As it was, I became so weak and emaciated towards the conclusion of the term that the surgeon was induced to allow me a more nourishing kind of diet during the last few weeks of my imprisonment to keep me from sinking altogether. As for my fellow-prisoner, Mr. Collins, who was of a more robust constitution than myself, he, from being a stout, portly person when he entered, became so thin, before the animal food was allowed to us, that he could easily put his hat within the waistband of his trousers. It would be tedious to recount the various annoyances to which we were subjected, by the orders of our very severe disciplinarians, the magistrates, during our imprisonment. The few letters addressed to us were in-

variably opened, and those we sent out scrupulously examined, to see if they contained a sentence savouring of freedom, which, if they did, were prevented from going altogether. A letter to my poor old mother was kept back altogether, because I said something in it of better men having suffered in the cause of liberty. My wife was only allowed to see me twice during my imprisonment, and that in the presence of the turnkey, who heard every word spoken. We were not even allowed to have a razor of our own to shave ourselves, but to submit to the operation of the prison barber, one of the prisoners. One of whom who shaved me for some time was the notorious Jem Bradley, who, with some others, was, I understand, subsequently hanged in Australia for the number of murders they had committed. I had not, however, any cause to complain of Jem's conduct towards me, but having heard him on one occasion describing to the prisoners how he threw a woman down who had offended him, and then *kicked her in the face and eyes*, I had some scruples in trusting my face to him in future, and managed to bribe him with some of my bread for the loan of his razor to operate on myself. A few weeks before the termination of our imprisonment we were informed by the magistrates that the Government was disposed to remit the remaining part of our sentence, providing we would be bound for our good behaviour for twelve months. This we refused to do, and were kept our full term. The following letter contains our reasons for this refusal :—

"Warwick Gaol, May 6th, 1840.

"To the Right Hon. the Marquis of Normanby, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department.

"My Lord,—The Visiting Magistrates of the County Gaol of Warwick having read to us a communication, dated Whitehall, May 5th, and signed S. M. Phillips, in which it is stated that your lordship will recommend us to her Majesty for a remission of the remaining part of our sentence, provided we are willing to enter into our own

recognizances in £50 each for our good behaviour for one year, we beg respectfully to submit the following as our answer :—That to enter into any bond for our future good conduct would at once be an admission of past guilt ; and, however a prejudiced jury may have determined the resolutions we caused to be published, condemnatory of the attack of the police, as an act in opposition to the law of libel, we cannot yet bring ourselves to believe that any guilt or criminality has been attached to our past conduct. We have, however, suffered the penalty of nearly ten months' imprisonment for having, in common with a large portion of the public press and a large majority of our countrymen, expressed that condemnatory opinion. We have been about the first political victims who have been classed and punished as misdemeanants and felons because we happened to be of *the working class*. We have had our health injured and constitutions greatly undermined by the treatment already experienced, and we are disposed to suffer whatever future punishment may be inflicted upon us rather than enter into any such terms as those proposed by your lordship.

" We remain your lordship's most obedient servants,

" Wm. Lovett,
" John Collins."

I may here state that when pen, ink, paper, and a few books were allowed to us, I commenced the writing of a little work entitled, " *Chartism, or a New Organization of the People*," which was published when we came out, in our joint names. The chief object of this work was to induce the Chartists of the United Kingdom to form themselves into a National Association for the erection of halls and schools of various kinds for the purposes of education—for the establishing of libraries ; the printing of tracts ; and the sending out missionaries ; with the view of forming an enlightened public opinion throughout the country in favour of the Charter, and thus better preparing the people for the exercise of the political rights we were then contending for. The writing a little of this work daily, when

I was well enough, contributed very much to relieve the tedium and monotony of my prison life, although, as will hereafter appear, it was the means of bringing down upon my head censures unmitigated and unparalleled. Being very doubtful whether such a work would be allowed to pass the prison gates, we contrived to smuggle out a copy of it, with the view of getting it published on the day of our liberation. But the friend to whom it was sent, wishing me to unite in another project—the Corn Law Agitation—threw cold water on the proposal, so that its publication was greatly delayed, to our ultimate loss.

In the brief sketch I have given of our treatment in Warwick Gaol, most persons must be struck with the immense power for evil which our unpaid magistracy possess—a power to obstruct all mitigation of suffering, and to give, if they choose, a two-fold severity to the law. For let two persons, in two different counties, be tried for similar offences before the same judge, and condemned under the same Act to suffer similar penalties, owing to the power possessed by the magistracy, the punishment of the one person may be two-fold more severe than that of the other. In the one prison the diet may be poor and scanty, the silent system enforced, the discipline severe, and measures the most arbitrary and despotic adopted for the enforcement of it; while in the other prison kindness of treatment and an ample supply of food may render imprisonment comparatively light. Thus it is seen that magistrates, by having the making and enforcement of our prison regulations, have a power to increase the severity or to neutralize the power of the law; a power in fact greater than is possessed by Queen, Lords, or Commons. In fact, our whole prison discipline seems calculated to make bad worse, instead of improvement or reformation. The instruction of the poor boys in Warwick Gaol was entrusted to an ignorant turnkey, and the deprivation of food the means adopted for quickening the remembrance of the tasks imposed on them. As for the adults, they were allowed to instruct each other regarding the best means of making and passing bad money, and for becoming

more expert and successful depredators. We heard one of them instructing another, whose time had nearly expired, *how to rob his own mother*,* the conditions being that he was to send in to him a pair of shoes, with some of the silver between the soles; and yet we were obliged to be silent for our own safety, they being our daily companions. But Warwick Gaol was provided with a clergyman to teach these poor neglected wretches *their religious duties*. His power for good may be judged of when I state that I have seen him from the pulpit point out to the gaoler poor wretches for unavoidably *coughing*, after they had been kept standing in the cold yard for nearly half an hour, without their hats, in the winter season; and for which trifling offence they would be locked up in the refractory cell for a certain period. And the nature of this cold, dark cell may be imagined when I state, that I knew a boy of the name of Griffiths, of the age of 17, locked up in it for three days and nights in the month of February, for having quarrelled and struck another boy, and when he came out he was so swollen as hardly to be known; he had several holes in his feet, and *two of his toes festered off*.

While my friend Collins and myself were thus squabbling and ruminating in Warwick Gaol, important events were taking place outside, of which a few imperfect scraps of information occasionally reached us through the new prisoners admitted into our yard. The trial of our friend Vincent, I may observe, took place a few days before our own, and ended in his incarceration for twelve months. His treatment was also severe, and his jury equally prejudiced against him as our own; for in a petition describing his mode of treatment, it is deposed that one of his jury, in rejoicing at his capture, had been heard to declare, that *he would give nine-pence to buy a halter for hanging him*

* His mother kept a greengrocer's shop, and when she went to market with her horse and cart she placed her little bag of money in one corner of it, behind the bags and baskets, and this being known by her unworthy son, he instructed the out-going thief to rob her, on condition of his sending him a portion of the money between the soles of a new pair of shoes, as shoes and articles of clothing were admitted.

without judge or jury. Our trials were speedily followed by those of McDouall, Brown, O'Brien, Richardson, Fenning, Richards, O'Connor, Crabtree, Frost, Carrier and Neesom, all members of the Convention, and by a host of others in different parts of the kingdom; the political prisoners incarcerated in the prisons of England and Wales in the years 1839 and 1840 being 443, besides many others subsequently. But the most serious of all the events that happened during our imprisonment was the Newport outbreak, and the transportation of John Frost and his companions. Of the cause of this unhappy affair I had no opportunity of learning while in prison; but soon after I came out I made enquiries, and from a person who took an active part in matters pertaining to it, I learnt the following :—That the chief cause that led to the outbreak was the treatment pursued towards Vincent in particular, as well as of the Chartists generally. That Mr. Frost, having done all he could to effect an alteration in Vincent's treatment, came to London. That, in company with two or three members of the Convention, on complaining of the conduct of the authorities, he said he had great difficulty in restraining the Welsh Chartists from endeavouring to release Vincent by force. On this one of the parties present said, if the Welsh effect a rising in favour of Vincent, the people of Yorkshire and Lancashire, he knew, were ready to join in a rising for the Charter. This seems to have been the origin of the affair, but nothing further was done until both parties had gone back and consulted the leading men in their respective districts; Mr. Frost, it would seem, having taken upon himself to consult the Welsh, and Peter Bussy, the people of Yorkshire and Lancashire, Soon after a meeting was convened at Heckmondwick, where about forty delegates attended from the surrounding districts; three of them being members of the Convention, and my informant one of them. At this meeting they were informed of the intended rising in Wales, and in the discussion that ensued respecting it—while several thought the rising premature—they were very general in their determination

to aid it, by an outbreak in the North. From another communication made to me by Mr. J. Collins—who had it from one of the parties—it would seem that in anticipation of this rising in the North—a person was delegated from one of the towns to go to Fergus O'Connor, to request that he would lead them on, as he had so often declared he would. Collins's informant was present at this interview, and described to him the following conversation that took place :—*Delegate :* Mr. O'Connor, we are going to have a rising for the Charter, in Yorkshire, and I am sent from —— to ask if you will lead us on, as you have often said you would when we were prepared. *Fergus :* Well, when is this rising to take place ? *Delegate :* Why, we have resolved that it shall begin on Saturday next. *Fergus :* Are you all well provided with arms, then ? *Delegate :* Yes, all of us. *Fergus :* Well, that is all right, my man. *Delegate :* Now, Mr. O'Connor, shall I tell our lads that you will come and lead them on ? *Fergus* now indignantly replied, " Why, man ! when did you ever hear of me, or of any one of my family, ever deserting the cause of the people ? Have they not always been found at their post in the hour of danger ? " In this bouncing manner did Fergus induce the poor fellow to believe that he was ready to head the people ; and he went back and made his report accordingly. But the man subsequently lost caste among his fellow-townsmen, for bringing them a false report—Fergus having solemnly assured them that he never promised him anything. No sooner, however, did he find out that they were so far in earnest as described, that he set about to render the outbreak ineffectual ; notwithstanding all his previous incitements to arming and preparedness, and all his boast and swaggering at public meetings, and in the columns of the *Star*, he is said to have engaged George White to go into Yorkshire and Lancashire, to assure the people that no rising would take place in Wales ; and Charles Jones he sent into Wales, to assure the Welsh that there would be no rising in Yorkshire, and that it was all a Government plot. When Jones arrived at Mr. Frost's house, he found

he had already left for the country, for the purpose of conferring with the leaders in different districts, and was directed where to find him. On his meeting Mr. Frost, and telling him his errand, he was informed that Mr. O'Connor's message had come too late; that the people were resolved on releasing Vincent from prison; and that he might as well blow his own brains out as try to oppose them or shrink back. He then urged Charles Jones to go back to Yorkshire and Lancashire and tell the leaders what the Welsh had resolved on doing. Jones being short of money for the journey back, Mr. Frost gave him three sovereigns, to aid him in getting back as fast as possible. Before, however, anything could be done in the North, the Welsh Chartists had congregated together, to the amount of some thousands, and, amid a drenching storm in November, had marched on with the object of releasing Vincent from prison. The result is well known; they were met at Newport by the soldiery, a skirmish ensued, ten people were killed and nearly fifty wounded, and Mr. Frost and several others speedily arrested. When the news of this disaster reached Yorkshire, the Chartists there were exasperated beyond measure, to find that they had been misinformed respecting the Welsh. They, therefore, resolved that they would have their rising—as previously projected—and that on the following Saturday; Peter Bussy, one of the delegates to the Convention, having been appointed to be their leader. Peter, however,—although one of the physical force party—seems not to have relished this prominent position, for he was very suddenly taken ill. The Chartists of Bradford, however, were resolved to see for themselves whether Peter was ill or not, but on searching his house he was not to be found; he was gone, it was said, into the country for the benefit of his health. His little boy, however, in chattering among the customers, let the truth out—for Peter, be it remembered, kept a beer-shop and huckster's shop combined. "Ah, ah!" said the boy, "you could not find father the other day, but I knew where he was all the time; he was up in the cock-loft behind the flour sacks." This being soon

noised about, Peter was obliged to wind up his affairs, and soon embarked for America. Fergus also, apprehensive of being called upon to set an heroic example, in those rising times, thought it a timely opportunity for visiting Ireland, so that by the time he came back most of the foolish outbreaks were over. Having been back for a short time, and keeping very silent, many of his disciples called upon him to make some exertions in favour of Mr. Frost and the other Chartist prisoners ; when he deemed it necessary to bestir himself, and offer a week's receipts of the *Star* towards the expenses of their trial.

END OF VOL. I.

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